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ABSTRACT

This report discusses actions needed in the training and assignment of personnel to achieve adequate foreign language capability in the Federal government. Eight chapters relating to the U.S. Government's official policies involving language training programs and assignments for government personnel overseas include: (1) development of foreign language training within the Government, (2) magnitude of foreign language training and related research with the Government, (3) insufficient language abilities of U.S. overseas representatives, (4) factors contributing to inadequate language capabilities, (5) State Department overseas language training programs and schools, (6) need for central management of command language training programs within the Department of Defense, (7) need for more systematic coordination of foreign language research and development, and (8) need for more systematic interagency coordination of foreign language training. (RL)

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REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

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Need To Improve Language Training Programs And Assignments For U.S. Government Personnel Overseas

B-17604[illegible]

FL004398

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES

JAN. 22, 1973

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-176049

To the President of the Senate
and the Speaker of the House of Representatives

This is our report on actions needed in the training and assignment of personnel to achieve adequate foreign language capability in the Federal Government.

Our review was made pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

Copies of this report are also being sent to the Secretaries of State, Defense, Agriculture, and Health, Education, and Welfare; the Chairman, Civil Service Commission; the Directors of the Office of Management and Budget, ACTION, and United States Information Agency; and the Administrator, Agency for International Development.

Elmer B. Staats

Comptroller General
of the United States

Contents

Page

DIGEST 1

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 5
- Development of foreign language training within the Government 6
- Communicating in foreign languages 10

2 MAGNITUDE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AND RELATED RESEARCH WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT 13
- Training activities 13
- Related research 16

3 INSUFFICIENT LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF U.S. OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES 17
- Language-essential positions not filled adequately 17
- State Department and related agencies 18
- Department of Defense 33
- Conclusions 36

4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INADEQUATE LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES 38
- Lack of agency criteria for identifying foreign language requirements 38
- Utilization of personnel 41
- Unreliability of language proficiency testing devices and records 47
- Summary and conclusions 50
- Recommendations 50
- Agency comments 51
- GAO evaluation 52
- Matters for consideration by the Congress 52

5 STATE DEPARTMENT OVERSEAS LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS 53
- Post language training programs 53
- Field schools 57

CHAPTER		Page
	Conclusions	61
	Recommendations	61
	Agency comments and GAO evaluation	61
6	NEED FOR CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OF COMMAND LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS WITHIN DOD	64
	Training at commands	65
	Steps taken by DLI to obtain an inventory of command-sponsored language programs	66
	Present status of command program inventory	67
	Lack of central control over supervision of training programs	68
	Possible future action to be taken by DLI to obtain compliance with Joint Service Regulation	71
	Conclusion	72
	Recommendation	72
	Agency comments	72
7	NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC COORDINATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	74
	Nature of Federal foreign language research and development	75
	Overlapping research and development activities	76
	New directions in research and development	80
	Conclusions	80
	Recommendations	81
	Agency comments	81
8	NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING	83
	The interagency roundtable	84
	Civil Service Commission publications	84
	Opportunity for further consolidation of classes between DLI and FSI	85
	Opportunities for coordination between other agencies	86
	Conclusions	90

CHAPTER Page

Recommendations 90
Agency comments 91

APPENDIX

I Letter dated August 1, 1972, from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget and Finance, Department of State, to the General Accounting Office 93

II Letter dated August 7, 1972, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to the General Accounting Office 97

III Letter dated July 27, 1972, from the Director, ACTION, to the General Accounting Office 100

IV Letter dated August 3, 1972, from the Auditor General, Agency for International Development, to the General Accounting Office 103

V Letter dated July 24, 1972, from the Assistant Administrator, Management, Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of Agriculture, to the General Accounting Office 108

VI Letter dated July 10, 1972, from the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, to the General Accounting Office 110

VII Letter dated August 15, 1972, from the Assistant Secretary, Comptroller; Office of the Secretary; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to the General Accounting Office 112

VIII Rating scales for foreign language proficiency 115

APPENDIX Page

IX Expected speaking achievement in intensive language training, FSI (6 hours a day) 117

ABBREVIATIONS

AID	Agency for International Development
AR	Army regulations
C	Comprehension
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DOD	Department of Defense
EM	Enlisted men
FAS	Foreign Area Specialty Program (Department of Defense)
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
GAO	General Accounting Office
OE	Office of Education
R	Reading
S	Speaking
USIA	United States Information Agency

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

NEED TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL OVERSEAS

B-176049

DIGEST

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

In 1960 the Congress enacted legislation requiring that foreign language competence of key U.S. Government representatives overseas be improved substantially to increase the effectiveness of U.S. representation abroad both with the "man in the street" and with foreign government representatives.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) made its review to

--determine the scope of Federal Government foreign language training,

--appraise progress in improving foreign language skills of U.S. Government representatives overseas after enactment of the legislation, and

--evaluate effectiveness of U.S. foreign language training programs.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of the 1960 legislation has not been met.

About 18,000 persons from 60 Federal entities, excluding intelligence agencies, are trained annually in about 150 foreign languages. The cost, including student salaries and allowances, totals about $60 million. (See p. 13.)

The cost of language training at the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State, including tuition, student salary, and related expenses, ranges from $9,500 for a 20-week course in French in Washington, D.C., to $56,000 for a 21-month course in Arabic at Beirut, Lebanon. (See p. 13.)

Little progress was achieved in the past decade toward substantially raising foreign language competence of U.S. representatives overseas. Language-essential positions not satisfactorily filled in the State Department increased from 38 percent in 1963 to 43 percent in 1972. (See pp. 17 and 19.)

In virtually all agencies language-essential positions were staffed with individuals lacking the required foreign language capability. Key factors hindering attainment of increased foreign language competence overseas were

--lack of emphasis on use of personnel having foreign language capability,

--lack of criteria for identifying foreign language requirements, and

--inadequate proficiency testing. (See pp. 17 and 38.)

Part-time language training programs should not be used as a substitute for full-time training. Part-time programs do not increase

JAN. 22. 1973

proficiency to a professional level in time for use by those assigned overseas. (See p. 53.)

The Defense Language Institute of the Department of Defense has not established an adequate inventory of command-sponsored foreign language training programs or fulfilled its responsibilities for management control and technical supervision. (See p. 64.)

The three Foreign Service Institute schools overseas generally were effective in training students to a minimum proficiency. Some students, however, were unable to successfully complete the course because of inadequate aptitude or motivation that should have been apparent before their enrollment. (See p. 57.)

More systematic coordination among Federal agencies of foreign language training and research is needed. (See pp. 74 and 83.)

RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

The Secretaries of State, Defense, and Agriculture; the Director, United States Information Agency; and the Administrator, Agency for International Development, each should develop a plan of action for his agency to improve use of foreign language capabilities, giving particular attention to:

--Assigning language-proficient staff to positions overseas with language requirements. (See p. 51.)

--Providing individuals with appropriate language training before they assume duties in language-essential positions overseas. (See p. 61.)

--Developing adequate criteria for overseas posts to use in identifying the specific level of proficiency required for each overseas position. (See p. 50.)

--Periodically reassessing language requirements for overseas positions and developing tests and testing procedures that will measure adequately language proficiencies of individuals. (See p. 51.)

--Mandatory retesting of individuals before assigning them to language-essential positions overseas. (See p. 51.)

--Periodically retesting those with language proficiencies. (See p. 51.)

The Secretaries of State; Defense; and Health, Education, and Welfare and the Director of ACTION should expand their coordination of individual research programs and develop procedures for making research results available on a Government-wide basis. (See p. 81.)

The Secretary of State should restrict enrollment in advanced language programs overseas to students demonstrating the aptitude and motivation (see p. 61) and should initiate (1) a program for intergovernmental use of foreign language training resources (see p. 62) and (2) an interagency committee whereby foreign language training resources can be used to the maximum extent by U.S. agencies. (See pp. 62 and 90.)

The Secretary of Defense should revise the Department's instructions on foreign language training. These should clearly establish the authority and responsibility of the

Defense Language Institute and the military commands to set up and give final approval to such training. In addition, the military departments' responsibility for complying with the instructions should be emphasized. (See p. 72.) The Secretary of Defense should inquire into the propriety of the operation of those Department of Defense language schools not under the technical supervision of the Defense Language Institute. (See p. 72.)

The Civil Service Commission should request and publish information from all agencies having foreign language training programs available for use by other agencies and (see p. 91) should require agencies planning to initiate new language training activities to furnish advance notice. (See p. 91.)

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Agencies involved generally agreed with the above conclusions and recommendations and cited actions taken or planned for correction.

The Department of State, however, identified problems with GAO's recommendation for periodic proficiency retesting, saying that it was exploring alternative means of developing timely and accurate inventories of foreign language proficiency levels of its personnel.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

Indications are that the present level of foreign language training in the executive branch is sufficient to meet current needs, if a greater weight is given to the language capability factor in selecting people for overseas posts.

The Appropriations Committees and other committees of the Congress may want to (1) explore this matter with the agencies involved in connection with their future fund requests and (2) require the executive branch to periodically report on progress made toward assigning language-proficient personnel to key posts overseas.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Government's need for personnel proficient in foreign languages has increased with the rapid expansion of U.S. involvement in world affairs and with the increased number of new nations which have emerged since World War II.

The Congress recognized this need and in 1960 passed legislation which would close the language-skill gap between requirements and capabilities by establishing standards for the foreign language proficiency of members of the Foreign Service and by encouraging foreign language training to meet those standards.

The objective of Federal foreign language training is to develop language skills to achieve more effective communication with people of foreign countries, either in their countries or in the United States, whether those people represent government, business, industry, education, or the general populace. Training needs depend on continued identification of reguirements, development and retention of acquired language skills, and measurement of proficiency.

Our review was made to identify, on a Government-wide basis, the magnitude of the foreign language training activity, to evaluate the fulfillment of foreign language needs, and to determine whether improvements were needed to better utilize the resources devoted to U.S. foreign language training.

Although we did obtain from U.S. intelligence agencies some background information which indicated that they conduct sizable foreign language training programs for their special requirements, they are excluded from this report because their activities are classified. We also excluded those foreign language requirements not related to training, e.g., the hiring of persons with native fluency to serve as instructors at the various language facilities, Voice of America announcers, highly qualified interpreters, translators, etc.

We collected data from some 60 departments and agencies; reviewed policies, procedures, and practices at the Department of State, Department of Defense (DOD), Agency for International Development (AID), United States Information Agency (USIA), Peace Corps, Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Bureau of Customs in Washington; and performed fieldwork in Germany, Greece, Lebanon, Belgium, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT

Department of State

Prior to World War II only modest efforts were made within the Government to develop a foreign language capability. World War II caused language training within the Foreign Service to be temporarily suspended, but in 1946 the Congress passed the Foreign Service Act, which authorized the establishment of the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI). FSI administers language training in the State Department and provides its language training services to other agencies.

In the late 1950s the State Department acted to increase the language capability of the Foreign Service. A Department survey in 1956 revealed that less than half of the 4,000 members of the Foreign Service had a sufficient command of a foreign language. Subsequently, the Department implemented a new language policy which encouraged employees to acquire proficiencies in two languages and restricted new employees' promotions until they learned at least one language.

In 1960 the Congress amended the Foreign Service Act (1) stating it was congressional policy that all members of the Foreign Service speak the principal language or dialect of the countries in which they serve (2) stipulating that those positions requiring the incumbent to be proficient in a foreign language be so designated and staffed and (3) authorizing the payment of incentives to encourage personnel to acquire proficiencies in esoteric languages.

The hearings on this legislation emphasized the importance of a language capability for employees assigned to U.S. missions overseas and the possible detrimental effect on an agency's or employee's mission that a lack of communication or extensive reliance on interpreters and/or translators would have.

A House report stated that the purpose of this legislation was to accelerate the foreign language competence of personnel overseas and added that improved language competence is necessary if overseas personnel are to be effective representatives of the United States. The designated positions requiring a foreign language capability were to be based on recommendations of the mission chief.

A Senate report stated:

> "The committee intends that foreign language competence be raised substantially--not for its own sake--but based on actual needs in U.S. missions overseas. The committee expects that the designation of Foreign Service officer positions abroad requiring language competence shall be based largely on the recommendations of the mission chief without regard to current budgetary targets." (Underscoring provided.)

Subsequent legislation specifically extended the same provisions to USIA and AID.

Although this legislation is not directly applicable to all agencies and departments operating overseas, we believe it represents congressional policy toward all agencies having requirements for language-proficient personnel, either domestically or overseas.

Department of Defense

While the onset of World War II caused training in the Foreign Service to be temporarily suspended, it had the opposite effect on the military services. In late 1941, both the Army and Navy initiated intensive Japanese language training and the Army established the Military Intelligence Service Language School at San Francisco, California (later moved to Minnesota). During the war the Army graduated about 6,000 persons for duty in the Pacific Theater as interpreters and translators. A need was also recognized for capabilities in other languages, and intensive programs were set up at more than 50 colleges and universities.

The Navy Language School was opened at the University of California at Berkeley in late 1941 and was later moved to the University of Colorado. By 1946 about 1,200 persons had graduated from the intensive 14-month Japanese course. Smaller numbers were also trained in Chinese, Russian, and Malayan.

In all, the military services trained an estimated 15,000 people in foreign languages during the war. In 1946 the Army school was moved to its present site at Monterey, California, and renamed the Army Language School. At the same time the Navy Language School was transferred to Washington, D.C., as the Language Department of the Naval Intelligence School.

In 1962 the Defense Language Institute (DLI) was created and given responsibility for supervision and technical control over most of the foreign language training within DOD. DLI is responsible for (1) conducting full-time language training for all U.S. military personnel when it can be economically and effectively done on a centralized basis and (2) exercising technical control of all other language training in DOD, except at the service academies. The Army's and Navy's language training activities were transferred to DLI when it became operational in 1963.

Peace Corps

A major development in the field of Federal language training arose with the creation of the Peace Corps in 1961. Because of the unique nature and locations of Peace Corp activities, fulfillment of their missions has necessitated training in many languages not needed before by the U.S. Government.

Section 24 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2521) states:

> "*** No person shall be assigned to duty as a volunteer under this Act in any foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment he possesses such reasonable proficiency as his assignment requires in speaking the language of the country or area to which he is assigned."

Other agencies

Foreign language training and needs are not restricted to foreign affairs and defense agencies. The Border Patrol Training School of the Immigration and Naturalization Service was established in 1936 in Texas and has been providing Spanish language training to its officers since that time. More recently the Bureau of Customs has also increased its emphasis on the need for Spanish-speaking personnel along the United States-Mexico border and in 1970 established a school at El Paso, Texas. This training is presently administered by FSI. Recently the District of Columbia Police Department established a language training program to establish a closer liaison with the Spanish-speaking people in Washington, D.C.

Other agencies with recurring language training needs include the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

National Defense Education Act

Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was directed toward improving deficiencies in the American educational system. The Language and Area Research Program of the Office of Education (OE), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, has sought, through research, to develop and/or modernize instructional materials and techniques for teaching foreign languages.

COMMUNICATING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Importance of foreign languages

Communication in foreign languages has become complex and presents a continuing problem to Government agencies. About 3,000 languages are spoken in the world today. The World Almanac lists 147 languages which are spoken by 1 million or more persons.

Many of these languages are quite restricted, both geographically and numerically. The Bengali language, for example, is spoken by about 100 million people but it is basically restricted to Eastern India and Bangladesh. Fewer people speak French but it is found throughout the entire world and is the official language in at least 36 nations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the New World. Most West European languages--such as French, English, and Spanish--primarily because of early colonization, are spoken around the world. The same is true to a lesser degree for other European languages. Because some languages are more widespread, some agencies make a distinction for policy purposes between world and esoteric languages. Languages are termed world or esoteric according to their potential for use at U.S. Government posts overseas. A world language is generally native to Europe, such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, or German, and is used at U.S. Government posts in several locations of the world. Esoteric languages have less common usage.

Often a European language coexists with the native tongue of the country. Combodia, for example, has its native language, but French is also spoken extensively. India, Pakistan, and many African countries are also bilingual.

It has been reported that certain east African countries are striving to replace English with Swahili. The ruling party in Kenya has announced that by 1972 "Swahili shall be spoken by all people at all times, whether officially or unofficially, politically or socially." Nationalistic actions such as this are by no means unique and indicate the importance people place on languages. They have an obvious far-reaching effect on the language communication requirements of the U.S. Government. They not only make communication between nations complex but also make communication within a country difficult.

The language needs of our overseas representatives can be partially resolved by interpreters and translators, but discussions with U.S. personnel overseas indicate that this alternative is less than desirable. Foreign language inadequacies have been the source of official embarrassment on more than one occasion, and, conversely, personnel who are proficient in a foreign language often benefit from maintaining a closer rapport with host country officials and from not being restricted to dealing with persons who speak English.

To insure effective communication, an agency must identify its foreign language requirements and must be able to match this against the capabilities of its personnel. Accordingly, steps have been taken to quantify language skills and requirements.

Quantification of foreign language skills

An agency must know the linguistic capabilities of its employees to match their capabilities against requirements, to determine additional training needed and to evaluate the quality of training programs.

Skills in comprehending, speaking, reading, and writing foreign languages are measured by tests and self-appraisals according to a standardized proficiency scale of zero through five in general use throughout the Federal Government.

0--no practical proficiency
1--elementary proficiency
2--limited working proficiency
3--minimum professional proficiency
4--full professional proficiency
5--native or bilingual proficiency

A proficiency rating of S-3/R-3 would mean that the person could both speak (S) and read (R) a foreign language with minimum professional proficiency. A person with a level-three rating is generally considered to be able to effectively communicate. Although he may speak with a strong accent and make errors, he can make himself understood and understand what is said.

There is a substantial difference between the various proficiency levels. A person receiving a level-four rating would be more than twice as proficient as a person receiving a level-two rating. (See app. VIII for a more complete description of these proficiency scales.)

Foreign language training requirements

The abilities of the personnel are then matched against the requirements of the agency. Foreign language training requirements may vary somewhat between agencies. The major requirement is to consider whether the overseas position is "language essential." A language-essential position is, as the phrase implies, a position which a department or agency has determined requires the knowledge of a foreign language to adequately perform the duties of the position.

These requirements are met in a number of ways. Foreign persons with the necessary skills may be hired to translate, or contracts may be awarded for the necessary services. U.S. citizens are hired because they are proficient in a needed foreign language. Finally, if personnel already having the skills are not available, foreign language training is provided to U.S. Government personnel by Government-sponsored programs.

An agency, by using the total language-essential positions as a base and considering personnel factors, such as rotations, resignations, retirements, or language-proficient personnel already available, computes its foreign language training requirements to assist in planning the workload for the various training facilities.

Federal language training programs today generally require about 5 to 12 months of full-time study, depending on the difficulty of the language. Some extremely difficult languages require 2 full years of full-time study. (See app. IX.)

CHAPTER 2

MAGNITUDE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AND RELATED RESEARCH WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

About 18,000 Government personnel in about 60 independent activities within Federal departments and agencies annually receive foreign language training. This training encompasses about 150 different languages and dialects and is provided at about 400 locations in the United States and overseas. DOD and the Department of State and related agencies account for most of the cost and student enrollment.

Foreign language training is expensive and represents a heavy investment in terms of time, manpower, and money. An estimated $20.1 million was spent on this training and associated language research in fiscal year 1971. Adding student salaries and related expenses of $39 million raises the total language training costs to approximately $60 million a year. The average cost of training Foreign Service personnel (including tuition, student salary, and related expenses) varies from $9,500 for a 20-week French language course in Washington to $56,000 for 21 months of foreign language training in Arabic in Beirut, Lebanon.

In fiscal year 1971 the Department of State and DOD provided foreign language training in their federally operated schools to about 8,500 students at a cost of about $12.8 million. Private contractors were paid a total of $5.5 million primarily by DOD and the Peace Corps to provide foreign language training to approximately 9,100 Government personnel and Peace Corps volunteers.

Defense Language Institute

The largest Federal component offering foreign language training is DLI. At the present time DLI consists of a headquarters in Washington, D.C., and three schools that provide full-time foreign language training.

1. The East Coast Branch at the U.S. Naval Station (Anacostia Annex), Washington, D.C., offers foreign language training through its in-house facility and until recently has administered a major commercial contract for training exceeding DLI's in-house capacity.

2. The South West Branch at Biggs Field, Ft. Bliss, Texas, provides Vietnamese language instruction using contractor-furnished instructors in Government-owned facilities.

3. The West Coast Branch at Monterey is the Government's largest language center and provides instruction in foreign languages in Government-owned facilities using Government-employed instructors.

The curriculum at the DLI foreign language schools includes instruction in about 25 different languages and dialects. In the past, additional instruction was given under contract in over 30 other languages and dialects. In 1970, 9,059 students were trained through DLI and, in 1971, 7,555 were trained.

The total cost of operating the various DLI foreign language training activities, excluding certain support costs not funded by DLI, was $12.7 million in fiscal year 1970. Another $1.9 million was used to fund headquarters operations.

Foreign Service Institute

Most agencies not having their own language training centers or contracts use FSI services. FSI training includes foreign language instruction, which in fiscal year 1970 involved 50 percent of FSI's enrollment. In fiscal year 1970 over 40 Federal agencies participated in FSI foreign language training programs. These agencies paid FSI about $2 million. The student input in fiscal year 1970 was approximately 5,300 including dependents, of which about 1,500 received training in Washington, D.C.

Training is also conducted by FSI at three field schools (Yokohama, Japan; Beirut, Lebanon; Taichung, Taiwan) and at about 180 overseas posts in about 50 different languages. The FSI post program has the largest enrollment. Over 3,700 employees and dependents began foreign language classes in fiscal year 1970.

The level of operation remained about the same in fiscal year 1971 and 1972.

Besides teaching foreign languages, the FSI School of Language Studies has a continuing program in the research and development of foreign language instructional material and devices.

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps conducts an integrated training program for its volunteers which includes foreign language training. The Peace Corps estimated the cost of such training to be about $2.1 million and $2.3 million in fiscal years 1970 and 1971, respectively (including staff training but excluding research and development).

Training is conducted at Peace Corps training sites in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico; at colleges, universities, and private organizations; and within host countries. Approximately 50 percent of this training, which usually lasts 12 to 14 weeks, is devoted to language instruction. Most trainees receive at least 300 hours of high-intensity language training, which is generally given by people from prospective host countries.

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has taught more than 150 languages to volunteers. During fiscal year 1969 approximately 7,400 volunteers participated in Peace Corps training projects, which provided instruction in about 100 different languages and dialects. This training input dropped to about 4,100 volunteers in fiscal year 1970 and increased slightly again in 1971.

The Peace Corps not only trains volunteers but also staff members and their dependents, when required, in foreign languages. This training is usually conducted through commercial contracts and at FSI and the estimated cost was $100,000 in fiscal year 1970. Over 200 staff members and their dependents received language training in fiscal year 1970.

RELATED RESEARCH

A number of organizations are active in foreign language research. Most active are the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare; Defense; and State; and the Peace Corps. The research consists primarily of development of textbooks and other instructional materials, development of new instructional techniques, and efforts to measure the effectiveness of current training.

Total research costs of these Federal agencies amounted to about $4.5 million, $3.7 million, and $1.7 million in fiscal years 1969, 1970, and 1971, respectively.

CHAPTER 3

INSUFFICIENT LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF U.S. OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES

The Federal Government has not been able to satisfy its overseas foreign language requirements, even though there has been a greater emphasis on identifying and quantifying needs and providing language training.

Language-essential positions were staffed with personnel lacking the required foreign language capability in virtually all agencies we reviewed. For example, in the State Department, although the percentage of adequately filled language-essential positions was higher in recent years than in the past, 29 percent in 1970 and 43 percent in 1972 were still not staffed with personnel with adequate foreign language qualifications. The situation was partly due to an underemphasis of the importance of language capability when assigning personnel overseas and to a tendency for Government agencies to base language requirements on existing availability of language capability rather than actual need. These practices tend to prolong existing shortages because the number of unfilled positions form the basis for training input.

We also identified other factors--such as inadequate criteria for determination and review of the validity of language requirements, inadequate measurement of language proficiency, and ineffective utilization of post language training programs, discussed in chapters 4 and 5, respectively--which also have contributed to the situation.

LANGUAGE-ESSENTIAL POSITIONS NOT FILLED ADEQUATELY

The major components of the foreign affairs overseas offices--the State Department, USIA, AID, and the Foreign Agricultural Service--employ different procedures in identifying language-essential positions. Listed below are the number and percentage of language-essential positions designated by these organizations and the number and percentage of positions filled and not filled by staff having the required proficiency.

Agency	Total U.S. staffing overseas	Occupied positions designated language essential		Positions adequately filled		Positions not adequately filled	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
State (July 1972)	5,824	991	17	564	57	427	43
AID (Jan. 1972)	3,465	1,143	33	496	43	647	57
USIA (Aug. 1972) (note a)	828	409	49	249	61	160	39
Foreign Agricultural Service (June 1972)	113	45	40	27	60	18	40

[a] Excludes USIA personnel at radio relay stations and other media activities overseas.

A comparison of the above figures between agencies is not meaningful because of differences in their position-designation procedures. State and USIA, under joint regulations, have designated as language essential those key positions requiring a level-three or minimum professional proficiency. AID, on the other hand, designates language-essential positions at varying levels on the proficiency scale depending on the difficulty of the language and on the requirements of the particular position. The Foreign Agricultural Service requires its agricultural attaches to achieve a level-two proficiency at those locations where use of English is nominal, and they encourage acquisition of level three.

STATE DEPARTMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES

The overseas posts often did not know which of the positions they considered as language essential had been officially designated as language essential by the State Department in Washington. They were also often unaware of the incumbents' proficiency, even though they had a responsibility to see that the persons occupying the positions received additional training required by their duties. Because some posts had not independently determined their own needs prior to our request for this information, they had no data on the language requirements of the various positions and as a result required training was often not given.

State Department

In 1970 the State Department reported 942 positions designated as requiring a professional level of proficiency in a foreign language; 665 positions were adequately filled. The number of language-essential positions has been reduced since 1963, particularly in the esoteric languages. The number of satisfactorily filled positions had declined substantially from 910 in 1963 to 665 in 1970, as shown below:

State Department Staffing Of Language-Essential Positions

	1963	1970	Increase or Decrease (-) Number	Increase or Decrease (-) Percent
All languages:				
Number of designated positions	1,471	942	-529	-36
Number staffed as 3/3 and above	910	665	-245	-27
Percent staffed as 3/3 and above	62	71		9
World languages (note a):				
Number of designated positions	1,091	735	-356	-33
Number staffed as 3/3 and above	711	530	-181	-25
Percent staffed as 3/3 and above	65	72		7
Esoteric languages (note b):				
Number of designated positions	380	207	-173	-46
Number staffed as 3/3 and above	199	135	-64	-32
Percent staffed as 3/3 and above	52	65		13

[a] Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese.

[b] All other languages.

According to the Department the reduction in the number of designated positions resulted from the elimination of desirable requirements as distinguished from essential requirements.

No firm criteria had been used in designating the positions and each position had been evaluated individually on the basis of consultations between appropriate Washington officials. We found little supporting data indicating the particular language needs of various positions and no documented basis, in most cases, of the reasons for the designations.

We noted, however, that the number of language-essential positions at posts where French or Spanish was spoken was considerably higher in relation to the total number of positions than at posts where the esoteric languages were spoken. For example, at the time of our review, about 80 positions, or 40 percent of the total of 185 positions, in Mexico were designated as language essential and about 1,160 persons in the Department had a speaking and reading proficiency in Spanish of level three or higher.

As an example of the reverse, there were no language-essential positions for Singhalese, the native language in Ceylon. Only one person in the entire Department had an S-3/R-3 proficiency in Singhalese, and that rating was a self-appraisal. Yet, Singhalese is one of 11 languages for which the Department offers monetary incentives to encourage employees to learn, and the Embassy has in the past cited as justification in support of Singhalese language training (1) the difficulties of obtaining reliable translations, (2) a day-to-day requirement making the availability of a Singhalese-speaking American essential, and (3) the discontinuance of English as the language of instruction in the local schools.

The State Department subsequently took action which reserved the trend of a reduction in the esoteric language positions which are difficult to fill. We were provided information in August 1972 showing that the number of esoteric-language-essential positions had been increased from 207 to 262. Two positions were designated in Singhalese and one incumbent had a limited working proficiency in the language.

Total positions designated are currently 1,031, of which 564 are satisfactorily staffed.

Observations at overseas posts

We visited certain overseas posts to evaluate the adequacy of the State Department's language capability. At most of the posts a greater need was felt for a language capability than that identified by the Department in its listing of language-essential positions. Our observations follow.

Far East area

We visited four posts in the Far East area, none of which had succeeded in filling all their language-essential positions. Overall, the Embassies had filled only 62.2 percent of the language-essential positions, as illustrated in the following table.

Number of Language-Essential Positions

Country	Approved	Filled	Percent filled
Japan and Okinawa	17	9	52.9
Korea	3	1	33.3
Taiwan	6	5	83.3
Thailand	11	8	72.7
Total	37	23	62.2

The number of language-proficient personnel in Japan and Okinawa declined from 30 in 1967 to 22 in 1970. Of the 22, 13 occupied positions not designated as requiring a language proficiency.

In Taiwan no positions had been officially designated as requiring a proficiency in Taiwanese, although the population of Taiwan consists of 11 million native Taiwanese and 1.9 million mainland Chinese. Nevertheless, Embassy officials told us that they tried to have one political officer at all times who is proficient in the Taiwanese dialect.

The official language of Taiwan (and mainland China) is the Mandarin dialect of Chinese. All six language-essential positions at the Embassy were designated as requiring proficiency in this dialect. Five of the positions were filled by language-proficient personnel.

The Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, during the past 2 years, submitted to the Department of State several listings designating 18 positions which the Embassy felt were language essential and assumed that those positions were officially designated as such. However, the Department, apparently without advising the Embassy, had officially designated only eight language-essential positions for Thailand.

In August 1972 the Department advised us that east Asia position designations in Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and Thai had been increased by 16. The number satisfactorily filled has remained about the same, reducing the percentage satisfactorily filled to 49 percent.

Europe and the Near East

We also visited four locations in Europe and the Near East (Germany, Belgium, Greece, and Lebanon) and found a number of unfilled positions, as shown below.

	Language-essential positions		
Location	Number designated	Number filled	Percent filled
Athens	6	4	67
Beirut	10	7	70
Bonn	18	13	72
Brussels (note a)	25	23	92
Total	59	47	

[a] Includes U.S. Mission to NATO and U.S. European committee.

We noted that the language-essential positions generally excluded administrative positions, such as those covering supply, communications, and security, and that some of these functions appeared to require a language proficiency. For example, we noted a procurement and supply officer, who dealt with local vendors, and a security officer, who worked closely with the local police force on legal problems of American citizens. Because these locals rarely speak English it seems that a language proficiency is needed to perform these duties.

Departmental officials at Bonn and Brussels identified 13 such administrative positions which had not been designated language essential but which they believed required a language proficiency. Nine of the incumbents did not have the proficiency the posts considered necessary.

In August 1972 the State Department provided us with information showing that language-essential positions in Europe had increased from 322 to 344. However, the number satisfactorily filled declined from 258, or 72 percent, to 205, or 59 percent. In the Near East and south Asia, language-essential positions had increased from 67 to 85, primarily those requiring proficiency in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. However, the number satisfactorily filled declined from 46, or 69 percent, to 30, or 35 percent.

Some positions may require a higher or lower language proficiency

Under a joint State and USIA regulation, all language-essential positions require an S-3/R-3 language proficiency. We found instances, however, where personnel at the posts believed a higher or lower level of proficiency was appropriate.

For example, an individual at one post advised us that he had served as an interpreter and/or translator for the American ambassador. Although he occupied a language-essential position and had a language proficiency of S-3/R-3, he believed his duties required an S-4/R-4 proficiency rating.

Another individual advised us that an S-3/R-3 proficiency rating in the Arabic language was insufficient to carry on a sophisticated conversation, and officials at the FSI school in Beirut concurred. Although this may indicate a need for more stringent application of testing criteria for the Arabic language, it may also indicate a need to upgrade certain key positions to level four.

The chief of the political section at one post expressed the view that effectiveness of the political officers at that post was hindered if they had less than S-4/R-4 proficiency. Other Embassy officials at the same post said that some clerical personnel needed about an S-2/R-2 for answering the telephone and performing other duties.

Under current Department regulations these needs should be identified by the posts and met through training programs at the embassies. As discussed on pages 53 to 61, however, we found that the post language training programs were ineffective for achieving significant increases in language proficiency.

Agency action

In December 1970 an internal State Department management tast force, in its evaluation of training activities and the Department's identification of language needs, also found that:

> "The percentage of language-essential positions filled by language officers has increased in the past 2 to 3 years, but only because the number of positions designated 'language essential' has fallen faster than the number of language officers assigned to them ***"
>
> * * * * *
>
> "No current projection of future needs for language/area specialists exists."

The task force recommended:

> "That the Department move at once to make a realistic projection of its language and area skill requirements and resources for the next 5 years ***"
>
> * * * * *
>
> "That there be a new determination of language-essential positions (LEP's) on the basis of more rigorous criteria."

We discussed the results of our review with departmental officials and were advised that:

1. All positions with a language requirement higher than the S-1/R-1 level would be designated as language essential to insure training before departure.

2. All positions requiring a proficiency higher than the S-3/R-3 level would be specifically identified.

3. Greater post participation in designating language positions would be provided and posts would be made aware of those positions ultimately designated as essential as a means of insuring the post's implementation of certain management responsibilities. Language positions would be designated on the basis of need without consideration of budget restrictions, as proposed by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

4. The need for greater emphasis on the linguistic needs of the administrative sections at some posts would be recognized and periodically evaluated.

We were also advised that State's review of language-essential positions was underway and that State was consulting overseas posts. This review, in which relatively specific criteria were provided to the posts and which relied largely on input from the posts themselves, had resulted thus far in a net increase of 89 language-essential positions (942 in 1970 to 1031 in 1972). We believe that the establishment of actual requirements will, in the long run, result in a firm base for realistic training and assignment requirements and an improved communicative ability for our Foreign Service representatives abroad.

In August 1971 the State Department announced it had developed an approach for the construction of a realistic 5-year projection of language-skill requirements and resources.

Agency for International Development

As of January 1972 AID had been able to fill only about 43 percent of its 1,143 language-essential positions. AID positions often require a lower level of proficiency than those of other agencies. Many of its positions are designated at the S-2 level and occasionally the S-1 level, with no requirement for a reading or writing proficiency. Sometimes, however, requirements are established at the S-4 level.

The percentage of positions satisfactorily filled has improved significantly in recent years. This improvement has resulted primarily from personnel reductions in Vietnam and other geographical areas where it is particularly difficult to develop language proficiencies and therefore to fill language-essential positions satisfactorily.

In designating language-essential positions, primary emphasis is given positions requiring Spanish, French, and Portuguese rather than the difficult-to-learn esoteric languages because many personnel are noncareer employees. This policy is based on the undesirability of training personnel when they are not likely to be available for later reassignment. For example, in Latin America, where Spanish and Portuguese are the primary languages, 836, or 96 percent, of the 871 personnel stationed there in fiscal year 1970 were occupying language-essential positions and 36 percent met the language requirements of their positions. By 1972, although the total staffing had declined, the number of employees meeting the language requirements of their positions had reached 54 percent.

In contrast, in Turkey we found 19 Turkish language-essential positions out of a total of 91 and only three of the incumbents satisfactorily met the language-essential requirements. In 1972 the staff had declined to 50, with three of eight personnel meeting the requirements of their language-essential positions.

AID had well-defined procedures for identifying, reporting, and reviewing language requirements, although they were not strictly enforced. The Thai and Korean AID Missions had not made their 1970 annual reviews of language requirements called for by AID procedures. When we brought this matter to the attention of Embassy officials in Thailand the review was made and the number of language-essential positions was reduced from 92 to 49, but only 15 of the employees assigned to these positions met the language requirements.

We believe that the lack of foreign language training continues to be a major problem in the agency, and, although management has made some efforts to strengthen its language training procedures, greater consideration should be given to language proficiency in making assignments to positions overseas.

Agency comments

AID agreed that staffing of language-essential positions had been a difficult problem and, while citing the increased emphasis on, and improvement in, staffing of world-language positions, stated that increased emphasis would be given in the future to predeparture training in esoteric languages.

They also acknowledged that obtaining the yearly language requirement reviews from the missions had been difficult but that special attention would be given to the 1973 reviews.

United States Information Agency

USIA also had difficulty in filling its language-essential positions. Our review at overseas locations, however, did indicate that the stated language requirements generally corresponded to the needs determined by the posts. It also appeared that the stated requirements for a foreign language capability were increasing at USIA.

Language-essential positions are determined individually by Washington officials who consult the posts. In August 1972 USIA had 434 language-essential positions, of which 249, or 61 percent, were filled with persons holding the S-3/R-3 proficiency required by joint State/USIA regulations. These statistics do not include those domestic and overseas positions having responsibilities which are directly language related and require a perfect fluency, such as Voice of America radio announcers. Requirements such as these cannot generally be met through the type of regular training programs discussed in this report.

The major difficulty at USIA, as with other agencies, is the staffing of its language-essential positions. Following are the requirements and the degree of fulfillment at four posts in late 1970.

Location	Staff	Language-essential positions	Language-essential positions Filled	Language-essential positions Percent
Japan	31	24	13	54
Korea	15	11	-	-
Taiwan	11	8	6	75
Thailand	33	17	3	18
	90	60	22	37

Incumbents of some of the 60 positions had some proficiency but less than the required S-3/R-3. We found that having less than the required proficiency was not always satisfactory. The consequence of filling a language-essential position with an unqualified person can be illustrated as follows.

An information officer who occupied a language-essential position at the post told us that he believed he was not able to perform his duties satisfactorily because of his language deficiency. He stated that he had about an S-1 proficiency and had to use an interpreter to accomplish his assigned duties of reading the local newspaper and understanding local newscasts. As a result, he did not have first-hand knowledge of the data being compiled by his office.

Foreign Agricultural Service

The Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of Agriculture, requires all attaches going overseas to locations where English is not common to have a level-two proficiency and encourages acquisition of a level three after arrival, but this requirement can be waived. These personnel are not always trained on the basis of immediate known needs but are trained at an earlier career stage in anticipation of subsequent need.

In fiscal year 1971 116 U.S. citizens, 46 of whom the Service considered to be occupying language-essential positions, were stationed overseas at about 60 locations. Of these employees, 25 met the S-2/R-2 proficiency requirements; an additional six held at least a 1+ proficiency in either speaking or reading.

One attache, who was stationed overseas and had only a nominal proficiency in the local language, cited an inability to read local economic and agricultural data, which he considered a hindrance to his duties.

Officials in Washington agreed that additional language training was needed but said that personnel ceilings on training assignments often precluded training prior to assignment overseas. As a result, the State Department Post Language Training Program and individual tutors are used overseas. They agreed that there have been too many waivers of language training and that the post programs have not been a successful alternative for intensive training in Washington, but said that, without an increase in manpower ceilings for training assignments, little could be done. Officials also indicated that they believed authority for language-incentive payments to employees would be helpful in stimulating personnel to achieve and maintain an adequate proficiency in foreign languages.

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps is faced with two major problems, unique to the Federal Government, in the area of foreign language training. One is the requirement for languages normally not needed by other Federal agencies. In many parts of the world, the highly educated classes and residents of urban areas speak a European language while a different language may be spoken in the rural areas. This is particularly true in former European colonies and in such countries as India and the Philippines where different languages are spoken in different areas. Because of this Peace Corps volunteers assigned to a rural area may have to speak any one of several languages, depending on the particular areas to which they are assigned.

The second problem is the time available for training volunteers. Peace Corps volunteers serve for 24 to 27 months, depending on the length of training which is usually about 3 months.

The Peace Corps has concentrated on high intensity, rapid-learning language training. Increases in language training may cause either an increase in volunteers enlistments or a decrease in other phases of training.

In 1969 the Peace Corps Language Training Division concluded after several studies that the language-training objective should be the S-2/2+ level because that level provided a reasonable probability that level three could be achieved within 3 to 6 months after beginning volunteer duties in the host country. It was further determined that substantial increases in training time were needed if the Peace Corps was to achieve these goals. It was found that the volunteers were receiving about 300 hours of training and that language training would have to be increased generally to 400 or 500 hours to achieve the desired S-2 goal.

We examined training contracts in effect at the time of our review and found that the level of training had increased, although not to the extent considered necessary by the Division of Language Training.

Data for fiscal year 1970 training indicated that volunteers taking tests at the end of their training had still not achieved the S-2 level in many cases. Of 356 volunteers tested only 26 percent had achieved a proficiency of S-2 or above.

We found in two projects teaching the Korean language--one of the most difficult languages for an English-speaking person to learn--that, of the 74 who were tested upon completion of training, six had achieved level-two proficiency and 29 had achieved level 1+. We noted that the contract for this training called for a minimum of 350 hours of training, whereas the minimum training recommended by the Language Training Division was 600 hours. On the other hand, one project for teaching the Spanish language, which is relatively easy to learn, produced no volunteers with a proficiency higher than level one. Of the five volunteers, two achieved level one and three achieved level 0+.

In July 1972 the Peace Corps advised us that a sample of end-of-training test scores showed a mean proficiency of 1.6 in 1969 and 1.7 in 1970.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

We reviewed DOD activities, concentrating primarily on the Army, and found that foreign language requirements, determined primarily by local commanders, were being satisfactorily met.

Records of military installations overseas revealed that often personnel qualifications did not meet the language requirements of the job assignment. Following are our observations at four such locations.

8th Army, Korea

Language-designated positions of 8th Army were not filled with personnel sufficiently qualified in the Korean language. We observed that many enlisted personnel, after receiving 47 weeks of language training in the United States, would be eligible to leave the service shortly after completing their 13-month tours of duty in Korea.

A military intelligence unit had 52 language-proficient personnel to fill its requirement for 125 language-essential positions. Of these positions 114 required at least a level-three proficiency. In examining personnel records we found that only two of the 52 language-proficient personnel were qualified at this level.

Our discussions with field officials established that proficiencies below level three were not adequate for the unit's required work. These officials advised us that, as a result of a lack of qualified personnel, they had been forced to use local nationals to accomplish the bulk of their work.

Personnel records showed that most of the language-proficient personnel received 47 weeks of training designed to provide a level-three proficiency in the Korean language at DLI. However, only one had achieved the level-three rating through DLI's training course. Most of the linguists who had received Korean-language training at DLI were on initial 3-year enlistments and were eligible for discharge from active duty shortly after completing their tours of duty in Korea. For example, 48 of the 52 military linguists assigned to the military intelligence unit were enlisted personnel. Forty-two of the 48 were on initial 3-year enlistments.

Typical tours of duty for such individuals generally consist of 2 months of basic training, 11 months' language training at DLI, 2 to 3 months of other schooling, and 13 months of assignment to Korea. In addition, these enlisted men would be eligible for up to 5 months' early release after completing overseas tours of duty.

We were advised that only about 15 percent of language-trained enlisted personnel of the Army reenlist for additional tours of duty, which is undoubtedly a key factor in the difficulty of keeping language-essential positions adequately staffed.

DOD advised us that as of March 31, 1972, the 8th Army had 34 enlisted Korean linguists although only 29 were required. The decline in requirements presumably resulted from the reduction of U.S. Forces in Korea. No data was provided on the language proficiency of the 34.

DOD also attributed its difficulties in the Korean language to inadequate instructional materials and testing devices, both of which are now being revised.

Military assistance and advisory groups, Thailand

The language requirements at the Military Assistance Command and Joint United States Military Advisory Groups, Thailand, for language-essential positions were not filled with personnel sufficiently qualified in the Thai language.

At the time of our survey, the military groups had 736 authorized positions, 221 of which had requirements for language-proficient personnel. Most of these positions were in the advisory groups of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Sufficient data was not available to readily determine the degree to which the Air Force and Marine Corps had satisfactorily met their language requirements; however, personnel files showed that only 98 Army, Air Force, and

Marine Corps staff members had some degree of proficiency in the Thai language.

Of the 144 Army positions requiring the Thai language, only 21 individuals, or 15 percent, had a proficiency equal to, or higher than, that established for their positions.

Level of proficiency required	Number of Language-essential positions	Number of Language-qualified incumbents
3	124	15
2	10	4
1	10	2
Total	144	21

DOD advised us in August 1972 that, although the occupational category of many language-related duties in Thailand correlated with minimum language aptitude, increased emphasis was being placed by all services on filling positions with personnel meeting the stated language proficiency.

U.S. Army, Europe

The U.S. Army in Europe had a requirement for at least 522 language-essential positions, most of which were military police and intelligence positions. When unqualified individuals are assigned, the required language training is provided locally, primarily at the U.S. Army, Europe, Combat Support Training Center (formerly the U.S. Army School, Europe) or the General Educational Development Agency. Army regulations require the sending units to give proficiency tests and to rate students upon the completion of their training, but in some cases this has not been done.

The training center generally was not giving tests at the completion of training. Due to the absence of such proficiency tests, the Army does not know if the training is effective and has no way of knowing its current linguistic capability in Europe. For example, in one group the inventory of language-proficient personnel was more than twice the number required by manpower authorization documents. Yet the unit planned to continue training its personnel because the language-proficient personnel included in the inventory either were not sufficiently proficient or were proficient in the wrong language. DOD advised us that the training center had instituted a testing service in early fiscal year 1972 and that the results were to go in the students' personnel records.

Some of these graduates may not be fully using their training. For example, personnel rosters of one unit which sent students to the training center showed that, 9 months after completing language school, eight of 24 participants were no longer assigned to that unit.

At the Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies, 14 of the 23 military graduates since 1967 were assigned to Vietnam upon graduation. The Department informed us in August 1972 that Vietnam was an overriding assignment factor and that all graduates had since been assigned to, or were scheduled to receive, a tour of duty relating to their studies.

Although the above examples are based on limited tests, they indicate that personnel receiving language training are not being assigned where they can use these skills. (See p. 43.)

5th Air Force, Japan

Language requirements for the 5th Air Force in Japan had not been adequately identified largely because of the abundance of American personnel of Japanese ancestry assigned to the command. No adverse effect was observed, but we believe that positions requiring a language proficiency should be designated and the requirements formalized.

DOD advised us in August 1972 that the 5th Air Force was taking action to insure that language qualifications are identified and recorded.

CONCLUSIONS

The major agencies overseas have been unable to adequately staff those positions requiring a foreign language proficiency with language-proficient personnel. We believe this indicates a general need to place greater emphasis on the importance of assigning language-proficient personnel to language-essential positions overseas and of assigning persons to language training prior to assignment overseas.

In responding to our draft report, the agencies involved concurred with our conclusion. (See p. 51.)

CHAPTER 4

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INADEQUATE LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES

We noted other factors which contributed to the inadequacy of U.S. agency foreign language capabilities overseas, as follows:

1. Agency criteria for identifying foreign language requirements were nearly nonexistent.
2. Utilization of language-proficient staff for positions requiring foreign language capability was not emphasized.
3. Proficiency testing was inadequate.

LACK OF AGENCY CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

We found very little criteria for determining the validity of present language requirements. Most agencies' position descriptions were generalized, with little indication of linguistic needs. We found little documentation supporting the inclusion or exclusion of positions when identifying language needs. Accordingly, we had to rely primarily on comments of the incumbent and his superiors in evaluating linguistic needs.

Few criteria were provided to the overseas posts for identifying requirements. AID was the only agency we reviewed which had provided criteria to the field for identifying language requirements. AID also required each post to annually review the validity of the designation, including the specific proficiency levels required of each position.

But, even in AID, we noted instances in which it appeared that the language requirement would not qualify the incumbent for his duties. For example, AID language-essential positions in Korea were for six area advisors in the Rural Development Division, five of whom were stationed outside of Seoul. All six positions required a level-one proficiency.

Only two of the personnel met this limited requirement. The duties of these personnel included advising the local province governors on all matters relevant to rural development and assisting in the preparation and implementation of the related programs at all levels of provincial government. A level-one proficiency seems insufficient to perform these duties.

We were advised that Rural Development Advisors were selected primarily for their technical ability and often had limited language learning abilities. An unsuccessful attempt to train these people in the past was cited, and AID stated that, while it is not pleased with the situation, it is the best that could be done to meet operational needs.

We also noted a situation in the Army in which the linguistic capability did not appear to relate to the job duties. The duties of Military Occupational Specialty 04B, Translator-Interpreter, included the requirement for translation of

> "*** foreign technical publications to provide information concerning construction, operation, maintenance, employment, and characteristics of military equipment including weapons, vehicles, and communication devices."

The incumbent must possess a vocabulary in the foreign language sufficiently extensive to understand material comparable to that contained in daily foreign language newspapers. The Army required a level-two proficiency in either reading (R-2) or listening comprehension (C-2) in the appropriate language for personnel performing these duties.

Under DOD regulation, however, an R-2 level of proficiency is defined as adequate for reading

> "*** simple colloquial texts such as children's books," and "requires extensive use of dictionary to read short news items. Written material seldom fully understood without translation."

Thus, the duties of the position seem strongly inconsistent with the required abilities of the incumbent.

DOD advised us that these personnel were trained to a level-three proficiency. They agreed, however, with the above-cited inconsistency and stated that applicable regulations would be reviewed.

UTILIZATION OF PERSONNEL

Personnel with a foreign language proficiency need to be used better. Utilization of personnel with existing foreign language capabilities is an important factor in meeting foreign language position requirements. Assigning personnel to language-essential positions is usually a highly individualized procedure involving a multitude of factors, of which foreign language proficiency is but one.

The ability to speak or read a foreign language with proficiency is generally treated as a secondary requirement. Except for interpreter and translator positions, the primary need is generally for job skills to fill the political, economic, administrative, military, agricultural, or other basic positions overseas.

Department of State and USIA

The linguistic capability in these agencies, in many cases, exceeds the requirement. But our examination of selected records indicated that language-proficient personnel may not have been used to the maximum.

We found that from 1963 to 1970 the State Department experienced a 32-percent decline in the number of language-essential positions filled at esoteric-language posts (from 199 in 1963 to 135 in 1970) and during the same period a 37-percent increase (from 814 in 1963 to 1,117 in 1970) in the Department's inventory of personnel with S-3/R-3 proficiencies in these languages. Putting the situation in other words, the State Department experienced a net decline of 64 positions filled with personnel with an S-3/R-3 proficiency while, at the same time, adding a net increase of 303 personnel with S-3/R-3 proficiencies to its inventory from 1963 to 1970.

Thus, it appeared that, with an increase in capability and a decline in filled positions, the utilization of language-proficient employees had declined.

Available records indicate, however, that USIA is using more of its linguistic personnel than is the State Department. Disregarding the degree of proficiency, we noted that the State Department and USIA in early fiscal year 1970 were utilizing 14 and 27 percent of their language capability, respectively.

In some instances employees are proficient in several languages, but it is highly unlikely that more than one, or occasionally two, can be utilized at any one location. The policy of making periodic assignments in Washington, minimizing repeated tours in hardship areas, and subordinating language skills to other skills reduce utilization.

We recognize that it is impossible to use 100 percent of the employees' skills, but we believe the demonstrated decline in use and the significant capability in some languages indicate that it can be improved through greater emphasis on the importance of a language as an assignment factor.

Agency for International Development

AID's potential for repeated use of language-proficient personnel is restricted because many of its employees are noncareer, but it did advise us that it is in the process of making language-proficiency data more readily available to its placement specialists, thereby facilitating better use of its language-proficient personnel.

Department of the Army

Use of previously trained Army personnel instead of training additional personnel is not very high. The Army estimates such use to be a maximum of 25 percent for enlisted men and 50 percent for officers. We were advised that about 40 percent of officer requirements in fiscal year 1969 were met through using existing capabilities. The principal difficulties involved in utilization within the Army appear to be the magnitude of Army personnel operations and the higher turnover (failure to reenlist) in the lower enlisted grades. DOD has also cited the Southeast Asia situation as an inhibiting factor in achieving optimum results in personnel assignments.

Requirements for language-proficient personnel are determined by the various Army components and are submitted to Army headquarters. Inventories are screened for qualified personnel who will be available at the needed time. If none are available, a training requirement is established. Enlisted personnel of grades E-6 and below are not screened because the potential for subsequent use at these levels is slight, because there is usually an intervening tour of duty in the continental United States after the initial utilization. By this time many of the language-trained personnel either would have left the service or would have been promoted to senior ranks where they would be screened for language assignments.

Although there are no requirements for subsequent utilization, Army regulations currently require a 1-year initial use of language training immediately upon completion of training.

We examined graduate evaluation reports which were submitted by agencies for fiscal year 1969 DLI graduates. The purpose of the reports was to have the graduates' supervisors identify any language deficiencies of the graduates as a guide for DLI for needed modifications in training courses. However, a number of the reports (12 percent of all those graduates reported on) indicated that graduates' language abilities were not being used. The timing of the reports was such that most, if not all, of the graduates should have still been on their initial 1-year tour. Following are selected examples of the comments received from various commands:

1. "Individual rated is not being utilized in a position requiring the use of a linguist." (24 weeks' German training)

2. "A records review of all individuals *** shows a total of 25 DLI graduates from classes conducted in fiscal year 1969. Only seven of these have been evaluated by appropriate using activities who have requirements for linguists. The other graduates are assigned to *** units which have no linguist requirements, and therefore cannot be evaluated."

3. "EM [enlisted men] not being utilized as a linguist. No requirement exists in this command for a Korean linguist." (47 weeks' training)

4. "Recommend these two students be transferred to a station in which they would be able to apply the Arabic language *** " (47 weeks' training)

5. "It is not possible to evaluate EM in the Vietnamese language due to current assignment in Germany." (12 weeks' training)

In linguistics it is generally accepted that proficiency in a language will decline significantly if the language is not immediately used. Unless personnel, such as those in the examples above, receive continued refresher training, which appears unlikely, their language training is probably of little benefit.

The Department advised us that Army procedures require local commanders to certify that personnel assigned to the field to fill a language-essential position are, in fact, placed in such a position. The Department further stated, however, that cancellation of requirements prior to completion of training and higher priority requirements, such as Vietnam, sometimes hamper the initial utilization of language school graduates.

Because (1) the training in many languages can last 1 year, (2) the cost of such training is substantial, and (3) the potential within the Army for repeated use of personnel is limited, every effort should be made to assign personnel with a foreign language proficiency to duties where their capabilities can benefit the agency.

Because of the costly and time-consuming training involved, it appears uneconomical to use military personnel who are subject to reassignment or termination of their enlistments to fill language-essential positions overseas. If these positions could be filled by civilian personnel not subject to rotation or reenlistment, substantial savings probably could be made. We believe DOD should consider reviewing its language requirements to determine whether it is feasible to assign civilian rather than military personnel to meet their overseas requirements.

DOD Foreign Area Specialty Program

In reviewing DOD's Foreign Area Specialty (FAS) Program, we noted that most of the Army graduates from the U.S. Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies were not given initial tours of duty which utilized their specialized training. Specifically, we noted that of 23 graduates from 1967 to 1970, only six received an initial utilization tour. Of the remaining 17 graduates, three were assigned to a special project and 14 were assigned to Vietnam, although seven of these had subsequent reutilization tours.

The FAS program entails intensive foreign language and geographical area study, university training, and on-the-job training or, in the case of German or Russian, training at the Institute. This is in addition to other training normally given to all military officers and, therefore, constitutes an above-average Government investment in officer training. We estimate that the cost of the 4-year Russian area specialist program is at least $80,000 per student.

DOD officials said efforts are underway to increase utilization of FAS-trained officers. They also stated that FAS students were being encouraged to switch to the Military Intelligence Branch where both branch and FAS requirements can be fulfilled at the same time, thereby increasing use of training. We believe this should aid significantly in increasing use of those language-proficient personnel.

DOD also advised us in August 1972 that filling priority Vietnam requirements was necessarily an overriding assignment factor and that these officers subsequently have received, or are scheduled to receive, utilization tours.

Need for proficiency levels higher than the S-3/R-3 level

A factor affecting utilization of existing personnel is the inability to accurately identify highly qualified personnel. Our review of requirements submitted by field commands for language-proficient personnel showed numerous instances in which level-four or even level-five proficiencies were required. However, there is no routine way for DOD to adequately fulfill them, because neither the Defense Language Proficiency Test nor the inventories of proficient personnel identify proficiencies higher than level three. We were initially advised that nothing is done to meet these requirements on the assumption that the level three is actually adequate.

Our review also indicated that the commands' requirements for proficiencies higher than level three may be partially attributable to deficiencies in the present testing system, i.e., that level three, as measured by the test, does not correspond to the definition of level three.

In commenting on our draft report, DOD advised us that:

> "Since DLI can only train to the 3 level of language proficiency, the Defense Language Proficiency Tests are designed to measure only that level in listening and reading comprehension. Adequate testing at the 4 and 5 levels can only be accomplished through extensive oral interviews and is not considered economically feasible from a requirement or resource point of view. In those few cases where a valid requirement for linguists with a proficiency level of 4 or 5 can be identified appropriate measures on a case by case basis are taken to fill the requirement, as for example, the Washington-Moscow Emergency Communications Link (MOLINK) which requires highly qualified Russian linguists."

UNREALIABILITY OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTING DEVICES AND RECORDS

Devising language-proficiency tests which are accurate, objective, and still easily administered to large numbers of subjects has been a long-standing problem among all the major agencies concerned. DLI's and FSI's tests are used most often to measure proficiency. Efforts have been, or are now being, made to improve the means of assessing language proficiency. We noted:

--Several agencies using tests conducted by FSI found the tests either not wholly adequate to their needs or too cumbersome to administer with the FSI staff available in the numbers and places where testing was needed. For example, the Peace Corps in fiscal year 1970 contracted for the development of FSI-type tests which could be administered by other than professional linguists.

--DLI has acknowledged that its tests are of questionable value and has contracted for the revision and development of such tests as part of its research and development program.

Proficiency testing is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of both in house and contract training, making better placements of personnel, and the programing of future training. In addition, certain agencies base promotional and incentive awards partly on the tested language proficiencies of their personnel.

Proficiency test inventory data out of date

The inventory of language capabilities of the major foreign affairs agencies contained outdated employee proficiency ratings. As a result, these inventories may be of questionable reliability as a management device and proficiencies may either be overstated because of possible decline in proficiency through nonuse of the language or be understated because of increased usage during the period. As a result employees may have been assigned to positions requiring language proficiencies at levels different from those actually possessed by the employees.

One official estimated that over 50 percent of the officers listed by his agency as having language proficiencies no longer possess proficiencies at the levels recorded on the inventory. Employees of this agency with language proficiencies are required to be retested upon their return to Washington from overseas tours. The period between proficiency tests is not to exceed 5 years; however, the official stated that employees are seldom retested.

A test check of language-proficiency records of certain foreign affairs agencies indicated that the proficiency data exceeds this 5-year retesting criterion, as follows.

Agency	Percentage of data over 5 years old
State	53.4
USIA	42.7
AID	27.8
Foreign Agricultural Service	28.1

A limited check of Army records showed a similar result.

Some agencies supplement proficiency tests with self-appraisals made by the employees themselves, however, in our view, these self-appraisals are less reliable because of their greater subjectivity.

The validity of old or outdated proficiency ratings is questionable, especially when the tested languages have not been used for a period of time. Language proficiency declines through nonuse, but the decrease varies with the level of proficiency reached. Both FSI and DLI acknowledge this decline and believe language proficiency decreases fairly rapidly at the lower levels of achievement (S-1/R-1, S-2/R-2). If individuals possess ratings of S-3/R-3 or S-4/R-4, learning will have a residual effect and can be reestablished by refresher training.

The Army has recently issued regulations which require that its language-proficient personnel be retested every 2 years for each language in which a proficiency was established by means of a written and/or tape-recorded language proficiency test.

The Department of State also has recently taken action to emphasize its present regulations, under which proficiency tests are to be given to employees at intervals not to exceed 5 years. We believe that these actions should improve Department of State and Army records and that the other foreign affairs agencies should take similar actions to update their records of employees' language proficiencies.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Personnel with foreign language proficiencies were not utilized to fill the language-essential positions. Other positions were not accurately identified as to their language requirements, and criteria for making such identifications were generally lacking.

In our opinion, the high rate of unfilled language-essential positions and low utilization of language-proficient personnel, indicate a general need to place greater emphasis on the importance of either assigning language-proficient personnel to language-essential positions overseas or assigning persons to training prior to assignment overseas.

We believe the staffing of language-essential positions could be improved by establishing definitive criteria for designating those positions requiring a proficiency and by maintaining an accurate inventory of language-proficient personnel for use as an assignment and training tool.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recognize that the problems discussed above exist in varying degrees in the agencies. We believe, however, that greater use of language capabilities can be achieved in each agency. We recommend that the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Agriculture; the Director, USIA; and the Administrator, AID, after considering the findings discussed in this report, develop plans for their agencies to achieve improved use of language capabilities.

Particular attention should be given to:

--Placing appropriate emphasis on assigning language-proficient staff to overseas language-essential positions.

--Establishing adequate criteria for post use in periodically identifying the specific level of proficiency in a foreign language for each overseas position.

--Periodic review and reassessment of the language requirements for overseas positions and development of tests and testing procedures that will adequately measure the language proficiencies of the personnel needed for such positions.

--Mandatory retesting of personnel for language proficiencies prior to assignment to duty in language-essential positions.

--Periodic updating of personnel language-proficiency test records so that assignments to duty or training can be made on the basis of staffs' current capabilities.

AGENCY COMMENTS

All agencies agreed that additional emphasis on the staffing of language-essential positions is warranted. The State Department, AID, and USIA advised us of recent organizational and procedural modifications aimed at improving staff assignment procedures and results. The Foreign Agricultural Service announced its intention of developing a plan to improve its language capabilities.

AID had already established criteria and procedures for post identification of language requirements but stated that increased emphasis would be placed on periodic reviews of these requirements. The State Department developed such procedures during our review, and USIA advised us of its intention to adopt similar procedures. DOD stated that it intended to review both existing criteria and the possibility of establishing a DOD-wide system for reviewing and reassessing language requirements.

DOD also advised us that each military service, except the Navy, has initiated procedures for periodic retesting of language-proficient personnel. The Navy is expected to adopt such a program during fiscal year 1973. The State Department, which had such a policy in effect, advised us that it had encountered problems in this area and that it was studying alternative solutions. They stated that once a satisfactory policy was determined, it would be adopted by State Department and USIA. AID said that it was able to retest personnel sufficiently in advance of anticipated reassignment to schedule any needed refresher training and therefore did not need to retest periodically.

DOD advised us that its development of new proficiency tests was continuing on a priority basis.

GAO EVALUATION

We believe that the above actions taken and proposed should, if carried to a successful conclusion, aid significantly in lessening the current language deficiencies of U.S. representatives overseas.

With regard to DOD's development of proficiency tests, we agree that universal use of a test such as that developed by FSI may be impractical in the Department. It would be desirable, however, to coordinate the research and development of tests with other agencies, such as the Peace Corps which has similar problems with established tests.

In light of the difficulties encountered by the State Department in maintaining a current inventory of language-proficient personnel, we suggest as a minimum that they require mandatory testing of all personnel sufficiently in advance of assignment to a language-essential position to schedule any required training.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

Indications are that the present level of foreign language training in the executive branch is sufficient to meet current needs, if a greater weight is given to the language capability factor in selecting personnel for overseas posts. The Appropriations Committees and other committees of the Congress may want to (1) explore this matter with the agencies involved in connection with their future fund requests and (2) require the executive branch to periodically report on progress made toward assigning language-proficient personnel to key posts overseas.

CHAPTER 5

STATE DEPARTMENT OVERSEAS LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS

In addition to its school in Washington, FSI conducts language training activities at about 180 locations overseas. Most of the overseas training is done on a part-time basis at the embassies and consulates, although full-time training is given in rare instances. There are also three field schools overseas which provide full-time training in Japanese, Chinese, and Arabic.

FSI does not intend for the part-time post programs to substitute for full-time intensive training. We noted that personnel enrolled were unable to achieve significant increases in language proficiency. A few of the individuals assigned to duties overseas without language proficiencies required for their positions were able to acquire the prescribed proficiency while on duty, but only after their tours were nearly completed. Most of the students did not raise their proficiencies more than one level.

The post training programs were hampered by poor student attendance. Those individuals not having the proficiency essential for their assigned positions are required by State, AID, and USIA regulations to attend, but the posts did not enforce the requirement. Also, students entering the three field schools should be closely screened to limit enrollment to personnel who are likely to be successful.

POST LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS

FSI provides language training at overseas posts by using local personnel as tutors or by contracting with local institutions. This service is available to, and utilized by, virtually all agencies with personnel overseas. The purpose of the programs is to assist personnel in achieving job-level or elementary proficiency and to assist adult dependents in meeting community and representational needs.

These programs are usually conducted 1 hour a day with training offered in the language or languages of the host country. The stated cost of operating these programs in fiscal year 1970 was $764,605, exclusive of student salaries.

The programs appear to serve a useful purpose for those who require a knowledge of the language for general purposes. The quality of instruction and benefits received were highly commended by virtually all students we questioned. However, those persons requiring a professional level of proficiency to perform their duties should acquire that proficiency before assignment rather than rely on post programs for training while on duty. The post programs can serve to maintain or refresh a proficiency once attained but do not generally provide adequate training to develop such proficiency in time for use on the assignment. For example, of the 84 students enrolled in the German-language program in Bonn as of August 1970, 33 did not increase their proficiency levels after attending an average of 123 instruction hours during 13 months; 49 increased their proficiency one level in the same period (of these, 38 were beginners); and only two increased their proficiencies more than one level, and they had attended an average of 438 instruction hours over 27 months.

Of the 84 students, 45 were in positions requiring a proficiency rating of at least S-3/R-3. Only three reached this level through the program, and two of these started at the S-2/R-2 level. The third started at S-1/R-1 and reached the S-3/R-3 level only after receiving training over a 29-month period. Thus, a substantial proportion of the employees' tours of duty elapsed before they achieved the required fluency.

We discussed similar circumstances with officials at Yokohama, Taichung, and Bangkok, where the languages are much more difficult to learn. They advised us that, to train personnel in the esoteric languages to S-1 requires at least 200 hours of instruction given one hour a day for 40 weeks.

We noted, for example, that one officer at the Embassy in Tokyo had accumulated 874 hours, or about 3-1/2 years, of training in the post program and was still working with intermediate Japanese--about an S-2/R-2 proficiency. An economic/commercial officer in Seoul, Korea, had a rating in Korean of S-2+/R-2 upon his assignment in Korea in mid-1968. He studied in the post program for the next 2 years, was retested in July 1970, and achieved a rating of S-3/R-2, an increase of less than one level.

We found that participation in the program was essentially voluntary, even though regulations require mandatory attendance in some cases. State, AID, and USIA regulations require participation in the post program for those employees occupying language-essential positions but not meeting the language proficiency requirements of that position. Although posts may schedule additional instruction to help personnel achieve a required proficiency early in their tours of duty, at the posts we visited training was limited, with one exception, to no more than one scheduled hour daily.

The posts were often unaware of which positions had been designated as language essential. This situation arose because in the State Department language-essential positions had been developed jointly by Washington and the posts in the early 1960s, subject to final Washington approval. Periodically, during the 1960s, revisions were made in the essential positions apparently without advising the posts of the changes. Because some posts had not independently determined their own needs, they had no basis for requiring attendance. The proficiencies of personnel assigned to some posts were not included in the employees' personnel records; thus there was no way, other than by personal appraisals, to determine the training needs of the employees. The State Department has since advised us that action is underway to identify these positions jointly with the posts and to keep the posts apprised of the designations approved. Procedures and other factors for notifying the posts of the proficiency of language-essential-position incumbents are being explored.

Students are required to attend no fewer than 80 percent of scheduled group classes, or 90 percent of individual classes--absences for leave and travel excepted. We found, generally, though that class attendance was sporadic and, in many cases, was below the required minimum. For example, 23 out of 52 program enrollees in Japan were not meeting the attendance criteria, in Taiwan 33 out of 58, in Beirut 11 out of 29, and in Frankfurt six out of 15.

The effect of this sporadic class attendance is described in State/USIA regulations, as follows:

> "Sporadic class attendance seldom produces a worthwhile result. On and off attendance for an hour a day stretched out over several months at best delays achievement of the purpose for which the training is authorized and correspondingly reduces the period during which the outcome is useful to the Government."

In our opinion, the post language training programs have generally not been adequate to train personnel to job-level proficiency and agencies should reduce their use of the programs as a substitute for intensive training. But the programs have achieved their intended objective of helping some personnel either to acquire elementary proficiencies or to maintain or make slight improvements on proficiencies previously acquired, as in the case of language-essential-position incumbents who are only slightly below the proficiency level required by their positions.

FIELD SCHOOLS

FSI operates three full-time language and area schools--at Beirut, Lebanon, for teaching Arabic; Taichung, Taiwan, for Chinese; and Yokohama, Japan, for Japanese. These languages are among the more difficult for English-speaking persons to learn, primarily because of their unique writing systems. Learning Japanese, for example, requires about 2 years of full-time study. Intensive initial training is generally given in FSI at Washington, particularly in Japanese and Chinese, and advanced training is provided at the field schools where the environment facilitates learning both the language and the related area studies.

The operating cost of these three schools in fiscal year 1970 was $541,718, excluding student salaries. The estimated cost to train a student at the Beirut school, including his salary and related expenses is $56,000 for the 21-month course.

The Army operates a similar school in Germany for Russian studies (see p. 70) which is also used by the State Department. FSI schools are used primarily by the Department of State, DOD, and USIA. The school at Yokohama has been used by other governments on a reimbursable basis.

Effectiveness of training

We visited the three FSI schools and found that, generally, the schools had achieved their goals. About 80 percent of the graduates achieved the course objective of an S-3/R-3 proficiency. Some students were unable to successfully complete the course because of factors which might have been apparent before their enrollment.

In some cases, this situation arose with DOD personnel over whose enrollment FSI had no control. For example, our analysis of the 19 students failing to attain the desired level-three proficiency at Yokohama and Taichung showed that 15 had been assigned to the schools even though their aptitude test scores and individual performance ratings indicated that they were not qualified for further intensive language training. The majority of these students were DOD personnel and were not required to meet FSI's selection criteria and procedures.

The following table summarizes, by agency, the proficiencies achieved by full-time graduates at Taichung and Yokohama during fiscal years 1968 through 1970.

Agency	Full-term graduates	Number level-three proficiency	Number achieving less than level-three proficiency	Percentage at level three
State	27	22	5	81.5
USIA	16	15	1	93.8
DOD	40	28	12	70.0
FAS	5	4	1	80.0
Total	88	69	19	78.4

As shown above, the employees of DOD generally have not done as well as employees of other agencies in the intensive language programs. DOD apparently applies less stringent criteria than does FSI in the selection of students.

At the Beirut school 44 students, mostly State and USIA personnel, attended the full-time course from 1965 to 1970. Of the 44 students enrolled, eight students, or 18 percent, failed to complete training; 29 students, or 66 percent, achieved S-3/R-3 or above, including six students who achieved at least S-4/R-4; of the remaining seven students who completed training, five received a rating of three in either speaking or reading and either a 2 or 2+ in the other skill. Thus, although the school did achieve good results with those students completing training, approximately one of every five students was unable to successfully complete the course. Two examples are shown below.

> Student A began training in fiscal year 1970 and terminated 8 months later at his own request. His training evaluation report stated:
>
> > "*** assignment seems to have been made without his being aware of precisely what it entailed in the way of service in the Arab world after completion of training.

> When he was informed that he would, in all liklihood [sic], spend a large percentage of his career in Arab posts or dealing with Arab problems, he realized that this was not what he wanted."

> Student B began training in fiscal year 1970 and was terminated by the Department of State 1 year later because of his slow progress. Comments on his progress report stated that his limited language aptitude and his slow rate of progress made it extremely doubtful that he would reach S-3/R-3 proficiency.

Employees of the Department of State and USIA who are scheduled for training at overseas schools generally are required (1) to take the Modern Language Aptitude Test and achieve a minimum score of 60 to 65, (2) to attend a 6- or 10-month intensive training course at FSI in Washington, and (3) during the Washington course to demonstrate an ability and aptitude to continue training at overseas schools.

Discussions with the directors of the two schools in the Far East and a review of the available records disclosed that students from other agencies were often not given the Modern Language Aptitude Test, were transferred to the schools after receiving their initial training from sources other than FSI, and frequently were rated as having weak to marginal potential for further training in these languages upon completion of their initial training in Washington. We were advised that the field schools have no role in student selection.

Army officials responsible for programing most Army student input advised us that efforts are made to screen personnel for aptitude and related learning factors, but that personnel shortages sometimes force the training of personnel without all desired qualifications. We believe the extensive time and cost involved in this long-term training warrants a stricter screening for aptitude and motivation by all agencies sending students to FSI overseas schools.

Possible use of other governments' schools

At Beirut student enrollment declined steadily after the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1967, from an average of about 13 to a point in 1969 when there were seven full-time students, although the enrollment subsequently increased.

We discussed this situation with an official in Washington who advised us that the enrollment at Beirut has been a matter of concern and that, if enrollments continued to decline, the continuation of the school cannot be justified. We were advised that various alternatives were being considered, chief among them the possible closing of the FSI school and the use of a British school in the locale.

Following is a list of schools of other governments which may have potential for American use.

1. Middle East Centre for Arab Studies, Shemlan, Lebanon (Government of the United Kingdom).--Our review at the FSI school in Beirut indicated that there is already a close professional relationship between these two schools.

2. The Federal Language Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.--This recently consolidated language activity of the West German Armed Forces teaches at least nine languages and provides language instruction to military personnel from several other nations. It maintains a liaison with the United States (specifically DLI) and other countries. DLI had suggested that this be used for certain elements of the DOD FAS Program.

3. The British Ministry of Defense Chinese Language School in Hong Kong.--This school provides instruction in the Mandarin and Cantonese dialects to both military and diplomatic service personnel, including foreign diplomats. This intensive language training program lasts about 2-1/2 years and is designed to provide a level-four proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing.

4. The Royal Australian Air Force School of Languages in Australia.--This school provides training in Japanese, Chinese, and Thai. All courses are of 46 weeks' duration.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that it is impractical to attempt to train personnel to a minimum professional proficiency through the post part-time language programs because of the time required to learn a foreign language. Achieving a significant increase in proficiency through these programs generally requires all or most of employees' tours of duty. Accordingly, this program should not be used to train those requiring a minimum professional proficiency for their assigned duties unless they arrive at the post with a language proficiency which is close to the required level.

Because the post programs alone cannot realistically be expected to bring personnel to a high level of proficiency, we believe that personnel selected for language-essential positions overseas should have acquired the necessary proficiency prior to departure for the post.

We believe that enrollment to State Department overseas field schools should be limited to those students showing a strong aptitude and desire for learning and that the results of preliminary training generally given prior to the advanced training overseas should be more thoroughly examined to screen out those students not likely to succeed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Agriculture; the Director, USIA; and the Administrator, AID, require appropriate language training of staff before they assume duties in language-essential positions overseas.

We also recommend that the Secretary of State have procedures established to restrict enrollment in the advanced language programs at the field schools to students demonstrating the requisite aptitude and motivation.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO EVALUATION

All agencies generally agreed that, although the part-time post programs adequately serve the purpose for which they were intended, they are not substitutes for full-time intensive training. The State Department and USIA agreed to give increased emphasis to this aspect. AID stated that increased emphasis has been given to predeparture training in the world languages and that in the future emphasis will also be placed on esoteric languages. The Foreign Agricultural Service agreed to move toward implementing our recommendations to the extent that ceiling and budgetary limitations permit. DOD stated that such a policy was already being subscribed to.

The State Department also advised us that the posts have been made aware of which positions have been designated as language essential. This will enable the monitoring of required participation in the post language training program.

FSI is also initiating consultations with officials of other agencies in an effort to insure that students from these agencies will be more carefully screened before enrollment.

DOD advised us that DLI has initiated a system to identify those advanced FAS program students enrolled in basic courses who do not possess the capability for language learning, for the purpose of terminating their participation in the special program, including the intensive overseas language training.

We believe that the satisfactory staffing of language-essential positions, currently about 50 percent, should be improved significantly with the agencies' stated intentions to minimize waivers of intensive language training.

Regarding the possible use of other governments' schools, we were advised in August 1972 that discussions had been held with the Director of the British School in Shemlan and it was mutually agreed that a merger would not be feasible and that the course objectives of the two governments were not wholly compatible. As a result modifications directed at reducing costs have been made in the operation of FSI's school in Beirut. We were also advised that the enrollment in September 1972 was 10 and is projected to increase.

The Department of State also cited a number of reasons why the other foreign schools would not be acceptable alternatives to the operation of FSI's schools in Taiwan and Japan. We do not advocate closing the U.S.-operated schools. Since, in the past, international cooperation in foreign language training has been demonstrated, we presented the foreign schools only as examples of possible alternative sources of training in difficult foreign languages.

It seemed to us that expanded coordination of foreign language training and professional exchanges with other English-speaking countries which have foreign language training facilities would be worthwhile and would optimize the economy and efficiency of operations for all benefitting countries.

CHAPTER 6

NEED FOR CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OF COMMAND LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS WITHIN DOD

A substantial volume of foreign language training is conducted within DOD, in addition to DLI training, described on page 13.

DLI's mission is to provide, within DOD, language training which can most economically and effectively be conducted on a DOD-wide basis. When circumstances warrant, however, the various military commands within DOD are authorized to establish language training programs to meet requirements peculiar to that command. The operation of a command program is subject to DLI approval and general operating guidance in accordance with DOD instructions.

We found, however, that DLI did not have the control over the total foreign language activity within DOD or over many of the language programs reported.

Specifically, we noted that:

--DLI does not have a complete inventory of all foreign language training conducted by various commands within DOD.

--DLI did not achieve the requisite control over many of the activities which it had identified.

--Surveys and inventories of command-sponsored programs indicate that some of these programs may be ineffective, that the training might better be provided by DLI, or that there is a need for DLI to supervise such training.

The lack of control appears to have resulted from a nonresponsiveness by the DOD military commands. DLI officials said that the agency lacked the resources to follow up on nonresponsiveness or to evaluate those programs identified.

TRAINING AT COMMANDS

Eight commands reported a training activity for fiscal year 1971, with total cost and enrollments of about $1,500,000 and 11,000 students, respectively. These command-operated programs are to consist of courses with the limited objective of developing a level-one proficiency or providing required refresher training to meet specialized needs. Generally, these programs are to be one of two types (1) schools managed by a commander to provide mission-required foreign language training or (2) schools managed by local education officers for the general education programs of each service.

The establishment, funding, and training methodology of these programs is subject to DLI approval. DLI, acting as a central management authority, is to exercise technical supervision and control over these programs (with the exception of the military academies, dependents in overseas schools, and academic career-development training) to insure the most effective and economical fulfillment of DOD language training requirements.

Under DOD regulation DLI has the authority to develop and/or approve standards for these programs, including but not limited to:

1. Language training methodology.

2. Instructor qualifications.

3. Course content and objectives.

4. Texts, supporting materials, and associated training aids, to include language laboratories and portable language tape recorders.

5. Tests and measurements of language aptitudes and skills.

STEPS TAKEN BY DLI TO OBTAIN AN INVENTORY OF COMMAND-SPONSORED LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

DLI took certain steps to identify the command programs but has had little success in achieving the desired control. There was no central control over language training in DOD at the time DLI was established in 1962.

DLI's primary task during its first 2 years of operation was to determine the scope of the Defense Language Program.

In 1964 DLI conducted a worldwide study of the foreign language training provided DOD personnel. The study showed that about 105,000 personnel were enrolled in foreign language training programs on a full-time or part-time basis. The total cost was about $11 million, about $2.5 million for command-sponsored language programs and $8.5 million at DLI. About 100,000 of the enrollment were in command programs, and 5,000 were at DLI. The study concluded that only 20 percent of the total personnel were being trained to the required degree of proficiency, while 80 percent were receiving ineffective training.

At the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a DLI team in 1968 surveyed language training programs in Southeast Asia. This survey encompassed all language programs conducted or sponsored in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Okinawa and identified several command programs at these locations. The survey team recommended that DOD:

--Program intensive foreign language training for military personnel in the United States by DLI rather than in short tour overseas areas.

--Phase out intensive Vietnamese-language training programs conducted by the Army at Fort Buckner, Okinawa, and by the Marine Corps at Da Nang, Vietnam.

--Establish a DLI Southeast Asia field office to assist in determining the required organization, methods, professional personnel, equipment, facilities, and training programs necessary for both English and foreign language training.

The military services generally concurred in the survey report recommendations, except for phasing out the intensive Vietnamese training programs conducted at Ft. Buckner and Da Nang.

PRESENT STATUS OF COMMAND PROGRAM INVENTORY

In June 1970 we requested from DLI a listing of all command foreign language programs which DLI was aware of at that time. DLI officials said it was encountering some difficulties in trying to inventory the programs and in getting the military services to report the language programs existing under command sponsorship.

DLI subsequently provided us with an inventory of those programs known or believed to be operating as of September 1970. The inventory, which showed that there were 18 programs, was based largely on a study of inventories of language training materials furnished by the various military commands to DLI. Of the programs, five were DLI approved and one was tentatively approved by DLI.

Military service	Number of reported command programs	Approved by DLI
Army	11	3
Navy	2	1
Marine Corps	2	2
Air Force	3	-
Total	18	6

LACK OF CENTRAL CONTROL OVER SUPERVISION OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

Ft. Devens, Massachusetts

On July 7, 1969, Headquarters, U.S. Army, Ft. Devens, submitted to the Director of DLI, a request for guidance in establishing a language training program. The objectives of the language program were to provide the 10th Special Forces Group with collateral mission-required language training in nine languages at the elementary level (S-1/R-1) and refresher language training.

A total of 288 students were to be trained in fiscal year 1970. The estimated initial cost for setting up this program was approximately $95,000, with recurring annual costs of about $136,000 per year, excluding the cost of course development and military support personnel.

During September 1969 DLI sent a representative to Ft. Devens to review the post's progress in establishing the command-sponsored language training program. This DLI official was informed by various personnel at the post that there were problems at the post level which might have an effect on the sound planning and management of the language training effort. Some of the problems were inadequate teacher training, unclear management (organizational and personnel) arrangements, and questionable contract procurement of instructor services. For these reasons DLI did not grant formal written approval of the language program.

On April 6, 1970, 6 months after the DLI evaluation, a representative of Ft. Devens contacted DLI to obtain its approval of their language training program. A meeting was arranged between DLI and the Ft. Devens representative, but the Ft. Devens representative subsequently notified DLI that he could not attend the scheduled meeting. A DLI official then asked the Ft. Devens representative

> "*** if that meant his command is no longer interested in establishing a command sponsored foreign language training facility at Ft. Devens under the provisions of 1-6 AR [Army Regulation] 350-20, 11 June 1969. He replied that that was in

> essence the decisions of his command, at least for the time being."

This was DLI's last contact with Ft. Devens on the subject of DLI's approval of their language training programs. The Ft. Devens program is operating but, in our opinion, is operating without the proper authority from DLI.

Ft. Hood, Texas

In May of 1967 DLI approved the command-sponsored language program of the 4th Army at Ft. Hood. Vietnamese constituted the bulk of the mission language training requirements, but training was also offered in 13 other languages. In fiscal year 1969, 40 officers and 330 enlisted men were programed for mission-required training.

Contrary to AR 350-20, DLI received no reports from Ft. Hood for fiscal years 1970 and 1971. Ft. Hood's language program is still in operation, but without the guidance and control of DLI.

Our discussions with DOD representatives at major commands overseas and visits to selected schools disclosed several other training activities where there are indications that DLI approval and control responsibilities are not being exercised.

U.S. Army, Europe,
Combat Support Training Center

This school has various language programs which relate almost exclusively to job-required skills and include both basic and advanced German-language courses. The basic course was for jobs requiring a working knowledge of German, while the advanced course emphasized military terminology. Both courses are used mainly to train military intelligence and special forces groups. In fiscal year 1970, 155 personnel were enrolled in these programs at a cost of over $100,000.

DLI representatives visited this school in July 1970 and found that the program included intensive training with course objectives at the S-2/R-2 and S-3/R-3 proficiency levels, which exceeds the level of training normally authorized for command programs. One DLI official said that this training should more appropriately be given at DLI prior to assignment overseas. We were advised at this school that there was no working relationship with DLI.

Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies

The Institute's objective is to produce competent area specialists who are knowledgeable of the USSR and other East European communist states. Twenty-five persons participated in this training in 1970. The related operating costs were about $250,000.

The Institute, located at Garmisch, Germany, gives 2 years of training, of which about 50 percent is devoted to the Russian language. The remainder is in area studies.

According to the Institute the program was not under the technical control of DLI and the Institute did not consider itself within the jurisdiction of DLI. DLI officials visited the school in July 1970 to be briefed on its operation, and it was apparently mutually agreed that only a professional relationship of informational exchange should exist.

5th Air Force, Japan

The 5th Air Force Education Services Department offers group study classes to satisfy spoken language requirements. Total group study costs for Japanese and Korean languages totaled $8,400 for fiscal year 1970.

Officials of the 5th Air Force felt that the group study program was not a part of the Defense Language Program because the courses had no specific proficiency goals and were intended only to serve as introductions to the language. Selected University of Maryland language courses are also offered. We were told that the DLI representative in Honolulu was aware of the program and had never indicated it was of interest to DLI.

U.S. Army, Korea

We found that the Korea Military Assistance Group sponsored an onduty, mandatory-attendance language program to develop an elementary conversational ability among Assistance Group personnel, in addition to the University of Maryland and group study courses offered in the 8th Army's General Educational Development program. Korea Military Assistance Group Regulation 350-1 requires all U.S. personnel on 2-year tours of duty and whose official duties require close association with the Korean people to attend the classes.

A DLI representative informed us that he was only concerned with the Institute's English language training programs. We were further informed that DLI had one representative in Hawaii, one in Japan, and several in Thailand, all basically involved with the English programs.

The 8th Army response to a September 1970 request for data required by DLI on foreign language training programs was that there were no command-sponsored foreign language programs such those as described by regulation. The reply stated that the programs in neither Japan nor Korea matched the regulation description of a command-sponsored school.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY DLI TO OBTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH JOINT SERVICE REGULATION

DLI said it would take the following proposed actions if the results of its letters to the services were unsatisfactory.

1. Revise the provisions of AR 350-20 which the services and their subordinate commands have interpreted differently and have caused negative reports to be submitted.

2. Request DOD assistance to solicit a more cooperative attitude from the services and the commands in assisting DLI to accomplish its responsibility under the provisions of AR 350-20.

DLI's proposed actions would, if successful, aid in strengthening their management of the Program.

CONCLUSION

DLI has not been able to adequately inventory command-sponsored foreign language programs or achieve technical control over the foreign language training activities within DOD. Although efforts have been made to achieve this control, which would be beneficial from a standpoint of cost and quality effectiveness, the efforts to date have been generally ineffective in part because of a lack of clear instructions as to authority and responsibility of DLI and the military commands in the operation of command language training programs.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense have DOD instructions revised to clearly establish the respective authorities and responsibilities of DLI and the military commands in the exercise of management control and technical supervision over the establishment, fund approval, and training methodology for command language training programs.

We also recommend that the Secretary of Defense emphasize to the military departments their responsibility for complying with these DOD instructions in order that total costs of foreign language training can be minimized and the quality effectiveness can be improved.

We further recommend that the Secretary have inquiry made into the basis for, and propriety of, the long-range training operations at Ft. Devens and at other schools operating without technical supervision and control by DLI.

AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD advised us in August 1972 that it concurred with our recommendations and that appropriate actions were being taken. We were told that, as a first step, a management review of the command programs was underway which shows that there is a need to clarify the relationship between the various programs and DLI. We hope that DOD will consider the possibility of bringing present and future command-sponsored language training programs under direct control of DLI.

We were also advised that a review is in progress to determine if the training requirements of U.S. Army, Europe, discussed on page 69, can be partially met through domestic training prior to departure overseas.

CHAPTER 7

NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC COORDINATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Our review indicated a need for a more systematic coordination of the programs of applied research carried out by DLI, FSI, and the Peace Corps in support of their language training missions and of the basic and academic-oriented language research supported by OE's Language and Area Research Program. These programs together entailed the obligation of about $4.5 million, $3.7, and $1.7 in fiscal years 1969, 1970, and 1971, respectively. In examining these programs we noted the following:

--Unplanned research and development overlapped. In about 60 languages two or more of these four agencies had developed, or were developing, basic course textbooks. Available data indicates that the problem is continuing, although certain steps were taken during the course of our review to reduce the likelihood of overlap.

--Existing cross-utilization of instructional materials, recent interagency agreements, and research into methods for meeting the instructional materials needs of more than one agency indicate some forward movement toward interagency cooperation and the feasibility of an even more systematic interagency coordination of foreign language research and development activities.

--Some agencies are separately redirecting their research and development activities toward topical areas which may provide further opportunities for interagency coordination and for an optimal utilization of available resources.

The present informal means of interagency coordination fosters an exchange of information and opinions but has had limited success in promoting the coordination of agency programs. A more systematically coordinated approach to the planning of research may help insure a better distribution of the costs and benefits of such research on a Government-wide basis in addition to avoiding the inadvertent duplication of research projects between agencies.

NATURE OF FEDERAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The three agencies--FSI, DLI, and the Peace Corps--conduct programs of applied research and development in the area of instructional materials, techniques of testing and evaluation, instructional methods, and advanced training technologies. Academic and basic research in these and other areas is supported by OE's Language and Area Research Program. Estimated foreign language research and development obligations by agency for fiscal years 1969 through 1971 are shown below.

	Fiscal year		
Agency	1969	1970	1971
DLI	$1,078,986	$1,231,255	$ 713,294
FSI (note a)	92,567	80,829	106,099
Peace Corps	829,598	508,000	295,937
OE	2,494,307	1,870,000	615,284
Total	$4,495,458	$3,690,084	$1,730,614

[a] Excludes research performed for other agencies.

DLI has since 1968 accelerated its research and development program--both contract and in-house. Present research efforts include revision of instructional materials, testing and evaluation, and advanced training technologies. The reason cited was that advances made by the academic community had ended the preeminence of military language teaching methods and tests--many of which dated from World II.

FSI's research and development activities have centered largely around the development of foreign language texts. These activities have been carried out in-house utilizing FSI professional linguists, since FSI has no distinct research and development funds. It has, however, received support from OE--$55,401 in fiscal year 1969 and $28,375 in fiscal year 1970 and $51,373 from HEW and DLI in fiscal year 1971.

FSI has also published in cooperation with the Government Printing Office language texts for sale to the public in 31 languages since 1959.

The Peace Corps, in a 1969 report, noted that much of the material it developed in prior years on teaching materials and techniques was "*** of limited worth *** providing no basis for future development." However, in many of the over 100 languages and dialects little or no material existed before the Peace Corps was established.

The priority subjects in the research supported by OE's Language and Area Research Program under the National Defense Education Act of 1958 shifted from improving the instruction of common languages in secondary schools and uncommon languages in higher education, to the development of new instructional methodology and materials for uncommonly taught languages. Some research, however, has been supported under this program for the language and area needs of other Federal agencies. Funds obligated in fiscal year 1971 for the Language and Area Research Program totaled $615,284.

OVERLAPPING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

We reviewed the following agencies' research projects and noted that research overlapped in some instances. The full extent of this overlap was not readily determinable; but, with available research and materials listings from each of the agencies, we found that, in about 60 languages, basic course textbooks had been, or were being, independently developed by two or more of the four agencies. Some examples are:

Korean--FSI with $27,220 in assistance from OE published a Korean basic course in two volumes in 1968 and 1969.

--DLI in 1970 contracted for the development of a basic course in Korean for $132,424.

--The Peace Corps in June 1969 contracted for the development of a Korean basic course to be developed not later than June 30, 1972. The contract also called for basic courses in

--French and Portuguese with the total estimated cost set at about $500,000. Both DLI and FSI have basic texts in French, Portuguese, and Korean.

Arabic--DLI contracted in fiscal year 1970 for a set of basic language textbooks in modern standard Arabic at an estimated cost of $143,786.

--FSI published a Modern Written Arabic text in fiscal year 1970, but no cost figures were readily available.

Russian--The OE Language and Area Research Program supported a project in Russian language instruction utilizing computers in fiscal years 1968 and 1969 at a total cost of $219,416.

--In fiscal year 1969 DLI signed a contract for a computer-assisted-instruction experiment in Russian at a total cost to the Government of $99,626.

Lao--DLI in 1969 contracted for an evaluation of existing materials and development of supplemental materials.

--FSI has an ongoing basic Lao course development supported by a total of $42,728 in OE funds thru fiscal year 1971. One of the main features of the FSI course was to be its design in modular form which would allow for the addition of special materials to meet other needs, including those of the military.

Officials of the different agencies have noted that special terminology needs, the intensity of the training, and the situational context in which the student must be trained require different teaching materials, making use of one textbook for all agencies in any given language impracticable.

However, language materials are exchanged between agencies. DLI uses FSI materials in classes where military terminology is not stressed. The Peace Corps has used some FSI materials and some developed under the Language and Area Research Program.

DLI officials informed us that the unique needs of the services have an impact on the types of materials developed. There is a need for (1) military terminology and (2) situational materials that will allow military language students to learn target languages as they might be used by foreign military counterparts.

DLI officials in 1970 noted that FSI materials were not suitable because of their lack of military vocabulary and because the situational context of the materials is oriented toward diplomatic representation rather than military situations.

They added that these differences strongly affected the military students' motivation to learn the target language. FSI officials agreed that fixed course content too heavily weighted toward the training needs of one agency may inhibit the enthusiasm of a student from another. FSI said that basic courses emphasize the fundamental structures of the target language in common situational contexts and leave specific technical vocabulary to specialized modules introduced later in the course.

A DLI pamphlet entitled "DLI Training Policy Handbook for fiscal year 1971 Contract Purposes Only," which is for use by contractors in developing materials, states:

> "*** DLI courses prepare students to cope successfully with general conversational situations, including those of a military nature."
>
> * * * * *
>
> "Related to the above is the establishment of inventories of generally relevant situations and general military vocabulary which are common to both civilian and military communities, as well as to all the services."

One DLI official noted that military services' needs for different vocabularies precludes the use of any but generalized military terminology. Another noted that this situation has led to the teaching of a more basic course with the service-oriented words and phrases being introduced separately.

Officials of three of the agencies involved expressed their desire for closer coordination on research and development matters. In December 1970 DLI and FSI signed an interagency agreement which included procedures designed to avoid inadvertent duplication by providing each with an opportunity to review the planned research and development activities of the other on a case-by-case basis.

In November 1970 OE signed an agreement to provide $16,841 to support FSI in developing guidelines for adapting existing, and developing new, textbooks in such a way as to enhance their utilization by more than one user. The result of this study, a volume entitled "Adapting and Writing Language Lessons," was published in 1971.

We believe that the above initiatives indicate progress in interagency cooperation and the desirability and feasibility of an even more systematic interagency coordination, especially in view of the new priorities in research on the language learning process and the subsequent application of research results to training methods.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

DLI's present research encompasses revision of course materials, testing and evaluation techniques, and advanced technologies, such as computer-assisted and programed instruction.

Officials of the Language and Area Research Program have noted that new priorities in research projects will include the following subject areas (1) research and experimentation in psychology of language learning, (2) teaching-methodology experimentation that applies such research findings to learning and teaching strategies, (3) linguistic analyses of non-Western languages, and (4) specialized teaching materials for uncommonly taught languages and for foreign cultures and civilizations. Other offices within OE are supporting related research in problems of bilingual education, and the Public Health Service is sponsoring research in various aspects of linguistics and semantics.

A 1970 statement of Peace Corps language training goals stressed the need for research on the problems of language learning and the adaptation of research results to concrete training and continuous learning for its volunteers.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that there is a demonstrated need for a more systematic and continuous program of interagency coordination--one which will eliminate duplication and thus insure that Federal research funds are better allocated toward meeting the overall needs of the Government.

The extent to which various agencies and the academic community use each others materials, the development of technology which may allow for the formulation and adaptation of materials to meet the specialized needs of more than one user, and the recent initiatives taken by or between some agencies to jointly develop materials or to review the possibility of doing so are evidence of forward movement in interagency cooperation and of the feasibility of even wider coordination.

We recognize that it is difficult to attempt to make the individual goals and objectives of these programs consistent with one another. Yet, we believe a program for a better sharing of the cost and benefits of language research and development must go beyond avoiding inadvertent duplication, seek mutually defined areas of common interest, and develop the means for program managers to make the needed decisions on a Government-wide basis.

Factors such as consultation prior to the initiation of research; preliminary joint planning, including the research concerns of other agencies; joint review of each agency's research plans; and Government-wide exchange of research information should be considered to achieve such objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretaries of State; Defense; and Health, Education, and Welfare; and the Director of ACTION, establish the goal of optimal sharing of the costs and benefits of future research related to foreign language training and that they:

1. Expand their efforts toward a systematic and voluntary coordination of their individual research programs.
2. Develop procedures for making research results available on a Government-wide basis.

AGENCY COMMENTS

While appropriately citing positive efforts already made in this regard, the addressees of this recommendation generally concurred with our conclusions and recommendations. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare stated that basic materials are tailored too much to the needs of the funding agency, with the result that there is much duplication of effort in their preparation. The Department proposed the establishment of an interagency committee to:

1. Develop criteria to determine what aspects of material development lend themselves to generalization.

2. Jointly develop and review long-range research plans.

3. Jointly participate in the selection process.

DOD stated that additional coordination and cooperation would benefit all agencies and stated that copies of its research and development plan have been, or are being, distributed to other Government agencies to preclude duplicate research. ACTION endorsed the formation of an interagency language committee.

The State Department advised us in August 1972 that it had invited those agencies involved to meet and initiate discussions as to the most effective means of achieving closer coordination and the sharing of resources.

CHAPTER 8

NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING

There is no single focal point within the Government through which all agencies can routinely avail themselves of each other's training facilities, contracts, and professional expertise, although recent progress has been made toward closer cooperation between particular agencies. Specifically, we noted:

- --An informal interagency "roundtable" has, since 1955, promoted an exchange of information and professional opinions but has had only limited success in promoting training coordination.
- --Civil Service Commission publications designed to list available interagency training are not complete because the applicable agencies have not reported such training, although required to do so.
- --The two largest Federal facilities--DLI and FSI--have a capability to absorb additional personnel into existing classes. The two institutes have agreed to reactivate the policy addressed to this problem.
- --Agencies with relatively small training requirements could obtain lower cost training and greater quality control over such training by taking fuller advantage of the facilities and professional expertise of FSI, DLI, and the contract training of other agencies.

A more systematic interagency coordination is needed, in our opinion, not only to achieve greater economy of operation but to contribute toward a greater effectiveness in training and in the assignment of language-trained personnel. Better use of training resources--funds, facilities, and expertise--could free resources which could be applied to a wider range of priorities. An important first step in this direction, we believe, is to achieve an interagency system for routinely placing the resources of all Federal facilities and contracts at the disposal of user agencies to the maximum extent practicable.

THE INTERAGENCY ROUNDTABLE

The interagency roundtable was established in 1955 as an informal organization for the exchange of information and professional opinions between representatives of the various foreign language, training, research, and user agencies. No agendas are set up, no minutes are kept, and there are no permanent offices or chairing agencies. Today, the roundtable regularly invites officials of 13 organizations to attend the monthly meetings.

Although the roundtable serves a useful purpose, it has not, in our opinion, achieved adequate results in terms of coordinating each agency's separate programs toward a unified goal. One agency official informed us that the roundtable's informal nature serves to promote a more frank and open discussion between these officials. Another agency official said that these meetings had been used for stating past accomplishments rather than for discussing and coordinating future plans pertaining to foreign language training and related research.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS

The Civil Service Commission has been established by law as the primary focal point for most interagency training within the Government. Agencies are further required by law (5 U.S.C. 4113b) to report such training annually to the Commission.

We were advised by Commission officials that all agencies are required to report annually their training programs and plans, both in-house and by contract, and to indicate any training requirements which could be met by interagency means. This information is then compiled into three major documents.

1. The Interagency Training Programs Bulletin, an annual publication (also published quarterly with supplementary enrollment information) listing

interagency courses available primarily in the Washington area.

2. Agency Training Centers for Federal Employees, an annual inventory of facilities and courses offered.

3. Off-Campus Study Centers for Federal Employees, basically a listing of cooperative agreements between Federal agencies and colleges and universities.

We were advised that, if an agency contacted the Commission relative to available language training sources, it would be provided these catalogs but that there is no requirement preventing an agency from establishing its own training center. We found, however, that there were no means for identifying through Commission channels, available existing Federal language training resources because they have not been reported. Only the following language training activities were referred to in the Commission's publications for fiscal year 1972.

1. FSI. (FSI was not referred to in the 1971 listing.)

2. Panama Canal Company Training Center, Ancon, Canal Zone (Spanish only).

3. Central Training Institute, Department of the Army, Vietnam.

4. Various courses offered by nonfederal educational institutions to employees on an individual basis.

Little information has been published on existing facilities available for interagency use, and we found that not all agencies have contacted existing operations prior to instituting their own training.

OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER CONSOLIDATION OF CLASSES BETWEEN DLI AND FSI

We noted that FSI and DLI could absorb additional personnel to fill existing classes by exchanging students.

We found that military students at FSI were being taught in classes apart from civilian students and were not generally sent to existing FSI classes. FSI officials advised us that the two institutes had consulted and that DLI was increasingly assigning students on an individual basis into existing classes. In addition, we noted that FSI and DLI were starting classes in the same language at about the same time. We were advised by FSI that the objectives of the training or the screening procedures used to select students were sufficiently different to make these groups unlikely to be able to study together. DOD said that every effort is made to adjust low-volume student input to FSI's scheduled starting dates.

DLI officials also informed us that they were taking action on a stricter application of scheduled starting dates to achieve greater consolidation of its classes.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN OTHER AGENCIES

We noted opportunities for agencies with relatively small training requirements to obtain lower cost training and greater quality control over such training by taking advantage of the training and professional expertise of FSI, DLI, and the contract training of other agencies. We also noted instances in which the same contractor was used by several agencies although each contracted independently and obtained the services at varying rates.

As mentioned previously, FSI provides reimbursable foreign language training to about 40 agencies; DLI provides training to the armed services, and, on a space-available basis, to other agencies--the Federal Bureau of Investigation being the primary user.

We asked several of the other agencies why they needed to establish their own training facilities or utilize commercial facilities in lieu of FSI or other existing facilities. Some of the reasons cited were:

1. Particular linguistic requirements were unique, such as terminology needs.

2. FSI's inability to meet desired starting dates of classes or agencies' inabilities to schedule student inputs to meet announced FSI class starts.

3. Citation of the Government Employees Training Act, which authorizes the establishment of training programs by, in, or through Government or non-Government agencies to increase economy and efficiency and raise standards of employee performance.

4. Preference of training methods not utilized by FSI.

5. Geographic convenience.

We discussed the situation informally with FSI officials who advised us that it was their interpretation of the Foreign Service Act that training is required at FSI only for those agencies involved in foreign affairs. We were also advised that certain of the agencies establishing or operating their own facilities possibly could be interpreted as members of the foreign affairs community and that FSI would agree to absorb these facilities if it was deemed in the best interest of all concerned.

The relative potential economies through consolidation of language training can be significant. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, for example, uses DLI's facilities extensively. Because the Bureau schedules its training input to DLI on a space-available basis, the training itself is obtained at no actual cost to either the Bureau or to DLI (with the exception of text supplies), and as a result DLI charges the Bureau no tuition fees. The Bureau sent 59 persons to DLI under this procedure during fiscal years 1969 and 1970. On the basis of commercial contract rates in effect at that time, we estimate that, if the Bureau had contracted for this training independently, the cost would have been at least $159,000 and could possibly have been triple that amount, depending upon the actual scheduling of input by the Bureau.

We believe the following instances demonstrate the desirability of closer coordination.

As a result of a 1968 Presidential instruction requiring all employees to know Spanish if they served large groups of Spanish-speaking people, the Bureau of Customs initiated a program early in calendar year 1970 to train 40 inspectors and agents for service at the Mexican-American border. Customs anticipated a subsequent recurring annual input of 120 persons.

Customs contacted FSI, DLI, and the border patrol and was advised that space was not available at that time to accept more than two or three students. Because of this and a preference for a condensed training time, Customs obtained the services of a commercial facility for a 6-week, high-intensity course in New York City and development of instructional materials geared to Custom's particular language requirement.

Customs anticipated that after completion of the fiscal year 1970 program, the results would be evaluated and the program transferred to Texas for handling subsequent recurring training needs and additional materials development.

The initial program was not entirely successful. Of the 40 students who originally enrolled, three dropped out and another 24 did not meet the limited course objectives of an S-1+ proficiency.

The cost of this program exceeded $43,000--$21,000 contract cost for materials development, $5,800 contract cost for the actual training, $3,000 for FSI proficiency testing services, an estimated $13,000 travel and per diem plus the salaries of the Customs employees.

Subsequently, Customs and FSI negotiated a working agreement whereby FSI will administer the Bureau's language program to be established in El Paso, Texas. FSI will provide all necessary text materials.

We believe that, had there been a clearly defined area of jurisdiction and responsibility among the agencies involved, such things as length of training, training techniques, and availability and/or adaptation of existing materials could possibly have been resolved. Customs officials advised us that they did not have the linguistic expertise to develop and administer this program and agreed that it would have been preferable to have the initial program established by agencies having the professional capability.

Expenditures at another agency which sent students to a commercial school on an as-needed basis in 1970 were nearly $20,000. It appears that much of this training could have been obtained under an existing competitively awarded AID contract with the same commercial school at reductions of approximately 50 percent. An AID official expressed the agency's willingness to allow other agencies to use their contract with this commercial school.

This commercial school provided training services at varying rates to 12 different Federal activities at a cost of almost $127,000 in fiscal year 1970. The rates varied because of such quality controls as supervision of classes by professional linguists, class size, and billing methods, required by some agencies.

In many contracts with commercial facilities, the contractor is required to do little more than provide training. Instructor qualifications, instructional materials, physical facilities, classroom supervision, etc., is often left to the contractor's discretion. Since many of the agencies with smaller requirements do not have professional linguists on their staffs, it would seem desirable and beneficial for these agencies to be closely associated with other agencies having such a capability to the extent feasible.

CONCLUSIONS

We have concluded that there is a need for better use of Government language training capabilities--both in-house and by contract. The corrective action needed to overcome the present diversity of training programs and policies should include:

1. Establishing a centralized referral program through which all agencies can avail themselves of other agencies' training facilities, contracts, and expertise.

2. Insuring a measure of quality control over the training of personnel from those agencies with relatively small language training requirements.

3. Requiring that such agencies use a central referral program before initiating their own language training.

4. Insuring that information on the referral program is made available on a Government-wide basis.

5. Providing as input to such a referral program, the future needs and requirements of user agencies anticipated far enough in advance to permit training agencies to plan for their incorporation into existing in-house and contract training classes to the maximum extent feasible.

The recent increased awareness of such agencies as Bureau of Customs on the desirability and need for a foreign language capability emphasizes the need and potential benefits of establishing a firmer basis for interagency training policies and professional exchange.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Accordingly, we recommend that the Secretary of State take the leadership to establish an interagency committee and related procedures whereby language training resources and associated professional expertise can be shared to the maximum extent by all benefitting agencies. We believe that such an interagency committee should:

1. Create and maintain a central referral program which would advise prospective user agencies on (a) what existing programs, in-house and contract, are available to meet their needs and (b) what should be done to better anticipate their future needs.

2. Facilitate the consolidation and monitoring of existing training contracts of agencies with relatively small training requirements to the maximum extent feasible.

3. Develop uniform policies for guidance of Government agencies on maintaining inventories of language skills, development of foreign language requirements, and utilization of personnel with language skills.

We further recommend that the Civil Service Commission include in its annual bulletin, which calls for agency reports of training activities, a specific requirement for the agencies having foreign language training programs available for use by other Federal activities to submit to the Commission pertinent data on their training resources for Commission dissemination.

We also suggest that the Civil Service Commission require agencies planning to initiate new language training activities to furnish it advance notice of such proposals to insure that the proposals fully consider whether existing language training resources can meet the agencies' training requirements.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Civil Service Commission agreed with our recommendations (see app. VI) regarding an interagency committee and stated that it will work closely and support such a committee. The Commission also stated that it will require submission of specific information on foreign language training programs available for the use of other agencies and to disseminate it to all user agencies.

The State Department, in agreeing to assume a leadership role in language training, said that the involved agencies had been invited to attend discussions on the most effective means of achieving closer coordination and sharing available resources. (See app. I.) On August 17 representatives from nine departments and agencies met and selected a steering committee to establish a statement of purpose for the interagency language roundtable. An agenda of items to be considered during the coming year was also established. We understand that subcommittees have been selected to examine each agenda item and to examine areas where more interagency cooperation might be beneficial.

ACTION stated that an interagency language committee would be a good start toward improving the interchange of information and that it would enthusiastically support the formation of such a committee. ACTION attended the abovementioned meeting.

DOD stated that it is ready to participate in any interagency review of language training which would result in savings to the Government. DOD also said that it had proposed in early 1972 an interagency study of the feasibility of having each low-volume language offered by one agency on a Government-wide basis. In our opinion this would eliminate small duplicate classes of these languages and also possible related research duplication.

AID cited instances of input to DLI at estimated savings of $20,000 and added that better dissemination of course schedules would be most helpful in taking advantage of other agencies' programs as the need and opportunity arises. AID representatives also attended the interagency meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington, D.C. 20520

August 1, 1972

Mr. Oye V. Stovall
Director of the International Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stovall:

The Department of State and USIA have studied your excellent draft Review of Foreign Language Activities of the Federal Government. Since the two agencies work closely together in language training activities and follow essentially the same training policies, we feel that a joint response from the two agencies is appropriate. [See GAO note 1, p. 114.]

The following comments on the recommendations found on pages 3 and 4 of the draft report have been developed jointly by State and USIA. Attached to this letter are more extensive comments on specific sections of the report. [See GAO note 2, p. 114.]

"...appropriate emphasis to assigning language proficient staff to positions overseas with language requirements."

> The Department and USIA are aware of the need to fill language positions with officers possessing the requisite language skills and are attempting to assign personnel already trained in the language or train officers before they depart for post. In the case of State, it is hoped that the recent centralization of the personnel system will facilitate the assigning of language-competent officers to language-designated positions. Similarly, USIA has recently transferred the responsibility for placement of officers from the geographical areas to the Career Management and Training office, thus facilitating the improved coordination of the training and assignment functions.

"...appropriate language training of staff prior to their assuming duties in language-essential positions overseas."

> The two agencies are attempting to ensure that personnel are adequately trained prior to departure for post. For example, the world-language training program was extended from the former 16 weeks to the current 20 weeks of instruction in order to ensure that officers have a higher

level of language proficiency before leaving for post. Where the officer is unable to bring his skill up to the required level before departure for post, the post language program is designed to help close this gap. However, realizing the inherent limitations of the post programs which were referred to in the GAO report, both agencies will make every effort to provide more fully adequate training in Washington rather than depending heavily on supplemental training at the post.

"...adequate criteria for use by the posts overseas in identifying the specific level of proficiency required of each overseas position."

The Department of State in January 1971 sent to the various geographical areas overseas messages embodying specific criteria for this purpose. As an example of these messages, CA-222, addressed to posts in the American Republics Area, is attached. USIA believes that these criteria will be equally useful with reference to its personnel overseas and plans to issue similar messages in the near future.

(see further Attachment A)

"...periodic review and reassessment of the language requirements for overseas positions."

In response to our request, overseas posts submitted their recommendations and these were reviewed in the Department. The review and approval of the recommendations has now been completed for all areas except Africa and Western Europe, and the posts have been informed of the results. The posts are now aware of which positions are language designated (p. 53 of GAO draft). Both the Department and USIA plan to periodically review and reassess the language requirements for overseas positions on a continuing basis.

(see further Attachment A)

[See GAO note 1, p. 114.]

"...periodic retesting of personnel with a language proficiency."

The regulations of both State and USIA require that officers returning to Washington from overseas report to FSI for language proficiency testing. As mentioned on page 50 of the GAO report, in 1970 the Department of State announced a policy which, by August 1972, would eventuate in official notation in the personnel records of officers who had not been tested within five years. The policy statement (CA-824 dated February 11, 1970) also provided an incentive for officers to present themselves more frequently for language testing in the form of a commendation to be included in the file of each officer who has been tested at least S-4 R-4 in one language and S-3 R-3 in another. For reasons explained more fully in the more extensive comments attached, the retesting requirement has not proved to be completely workable, and

modifications are presently being considered. Once a more completely satisfactory policy has been determined, it is anticipated that a similar policy will be instituted by USIA.
(see further Attachment B)

"...development of tests and testing procedures that will adequately measure the language proficiences needed."

The Department of State and USIA assume that this recommendation is not intended to apply to either agency, both of which regularly use the testing procedure developed by FSI and which has been adopted by most government agencies as the most reliable instrument available for measuring language proficiencies. Over a period of about 15 years the FSI test has proven to be a measurement device adequate for the needs of these agencies. It is worthy of note that when the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J. contracted with the Peace Corps in FY 1970 to administer its testing program, it immediately adopted the FSI testing system and approached FSI for assistance in the training of those who were to administer the tests. ETS has not to date developed a test which it considers an adequate replacement for the FSI test.

"...that the Secretary of State more closely restrict enrollment in advanced language programs overseas to students demonstrating the requisite aptitude and motivation."

Lack of sufficient preparation, aptitude, or motivation of students at the field schools has not been a problem of serious proportions in either the Department of State or USIA. FSI is initiating consultations with officials of other agencies having inputs of students into these schools in the effort to insure that students from these agencies will be more carefully screened before enrollment.

"...that the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Director of Action expand their efforts toward more systematic coordination of their individual research programs and development procedures for making their research results available on a Government-wide basis."

"...that the Secretary of State take the leadership to establish an inter-agency committee whereby language training resources can be utilized to the maximum extent by all benefitting agencies."

While the agencies enumerated above have for sometime cooperated in sharing research and training facilities, it is recognized that a more

formalized and systematic mechanism for coordination of these efforts might be beneficial. The Department of State has invited representatives of the above agencies and a number of others which carry on language research and/or training to a meeting on August 18, 1972 to initiate discussions as to the most effective means of achieving closer coordination and the sharing of available resources. A sample memo announcing the meeting is attached.
(see Attachment C)

Sincerely yours,

Richard W Murray

Richard W. Murray
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Budget and Finance

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

7 AUG 1972

Mr. Oye V. Stovall
Director
International Division
U. S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stovall:

On behalf of the Secretary of Defense we have reviewed the General Accounting Office Draft Report on Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government. At Enclosure 1 are specific comments related to the findings, conclusions and recommendations noted in the Report that pertain to the Department of Defense. As requested in your letter of May 19, 1972, we have provided operation and budget data for Fiscal Years 1971 and 1972 at Enclosure 2. [See GAO note 2, p. 114.]

A summary of comments on the five major conclusions outlined in the Digest of the Review that concern the Defense Language Program is provided below:

1. Lack of Criteria for Identification of Language Training Requirements. The need to establish criteria to assist field commanders in identifying language requirements is recognized as an essential element of the Defense Language Program. The Military Departments presently provide such criteria; however, the system of identification of requirements can be improved upon and action will be taken to make a thorough review of this area.

2. Lack of Emphasis on Utilization of Language Proficient Staff for Positions Requiring Foreign Language Capability. Utilization of language trained personnel has been a problem area in recent years, including the period 1970-71 which was characterized by personnel turbulence associated with our Southeast Asia effort. This situation accounts for many instances where utilization of linguists had to be deferred in order to fill more critical military requirements. It is a matter of

policy for all personnel trained in a foreign language at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) to be given a utilization tour immediately upon completion of their training. Occasionally, this is not possible due to cancellation of the requirement against which the individual was being trained or the emergence of a higher priority requirement which would delay immediate utilization.

The Military Departments also make every effort insofar as security policies permit to use personnel who are already qualified in a foreign language to fill language essential positions before training additional personnel. Reutilization of personnel is most effective in instances where language proficiency is a primary skill. It is less effective in areas where language proficiency is supportive only. We are making maximum effort to utilize and reutilize available linguists consistent with both the needs of the Services and career development of the individual. Although improper utilization cannot be completely eliminated, we believe that our current programs directed at reducing personnel turbulence will be of significant assistance to us in this effort.

3. Inadequate Proficiency Testing. All Services except the Navy have initiated retesting programs designed to periodically evaluate language qualified personnel. The Navy is currently studying a plan for the implementation of a retest program. Recognition is given to the fact that some of the test data are not current; however, continuing emphasis is being placed on testing programs to insure the collection of timely and accurate information. One aspect of the proficiency testing program that requires improvement is the quality of the testing instruments. Current Defense Language Proficiency Tests are not up to current psychometric standards and some may have been compromised due to long use. As a priority project, the Defense Language Institute is developing a new generation of tests that will be phased into use throughout the next three years. This effort is concentrated on developing tests in the high density languages first and is progressing on schedule.

4. The Need for Central Management of Command Language Programs. The situation regarding Command Language Programs (CLP) is essentially the same at present as noted in the Draft Report. Recognizing the need for an improvement in CLP management, the Defense Language Institute in concert with the Executive Agency (Department of the Army) is in the process of completing a management review of Command Language Programs. This should result in appropriate action to bring the Command Language Programs under the technical supervision and control of the Defense Language Institute.

5. The Need for More Systematic Coordination Among Federal Agencies of Foreign Language Training and Research. We believe significant steps have been taken to better coordinate Department of Defense language training research among federal agencies. In July 1970, the Defense Language Institute Systems Development Agency (DLISDA) was established to conduct full-time research and course development activities for the Defense Language Program. A comprehensive R&D Plan was developed which includes all current projects and establishes appropriate milestones to keep R&D work units on schedule. Copies of the R&D Plan have been or are being provided to other government agencies in order to preclude duplication of effort in language research. In addition, an interagency agreement between DLI and the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) provides for advanced notification and coordination of language program R&D actions. Additional coordination and cooperation would benefit all agencies and the Department of Defense will continue efforts in this direction.

We trust that these comments and those more detailed comments included as Enclosures will be satisfactory to your needs and assist you in completing your final report.

[See GAO note 2,
p. 114.]

Sincerely,

Robert C Taber

Robert C. Taber
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Principal Deputy

2 Enclosures

ACTION
WASHINGTON D.C. 20525

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

July 27, 1972

Mr. Morton E. Henig
Associate Director
Manpower and Welfare Division
The United States General
  Accounting Office
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Henig:

The following comments and information are provided in response to your letter of May 19, 1972 and the draft GAO report on "Review of Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government.

General Comments

1. The Peace Corps is proud of its record in language training. We are gratified that the evaluation recognizes that we have a distinguished record in this field, despite a few exceptions. We are especially pleased to be able to accomplish in 12 to 14 weeks of intensive language training what other government groups achieve in more than 40 weeks of training.

2. We have reduced our language research activities to a minimum. The Educational Testing Service Contract is our primary effort in this field. The ETS activity is an attempt to develop statistically significant comparative data on language learning in order to improve the management of PC language activities. Some specific data and comments on testing is provided later in this letter.

3. We would enthusiastically support the formation of an inter-agency language committee and would be willing to share all of our data, past training experience, and materials with other government groups. Such a committee would be a good start toward improving the interchange of important information between agencies.

4. Most PC training, including language training, is completed in the country where Volunteers will later serve, and the percentage is increasing each year.

5. The 600 hours referred to on page 33 refers not only to actual classroom instruction but also to language-related activities such as field trips and other cross-cultural activities which are a vital part of integrated training in the host country.

ETS Test Data

For your information, the following End of Training test scores for Peace Corps Volunteers have been compiled by the Educational Testing Service:

Year	Language	Sample Size	Mean Score
69-71	All Languages	2249	1.6610
	French/Spanish	966	1.7780
	Esoteric	1283	1.5728
1969	All Languages	866	1.6488
	French	74	2.48
	Spanish	230	1.72
	Portuguese	82	2.05
	Korean	76	1.26
1970	All Languages	1361	1.6769
	French	135	2.07
	Spanish	527	1.63
	Portuguese	133	1.98
	Korean	95	1.03
	Thai	54	1.10

FY 1971 testing results will be available in about a month. We will be pleased to provide this information later if you desire.

It should be noted that the above levels of language proficiency are not final since most Peace Corps posts provide in-service language training of a private tutorial or workshop nature. This training, plus daily use, results in a significant improvement in language proficiency over the duration of the tour.

The Peace Corps is currently experimenting with the alternative of developing program specific language training objectives which require the trainee to satisfactorily enact predetermined representative situations (i.e., the teaching of a skill to an apprentice, or the purchasing of several items in a market) in order to qualify to become a volunteer. An emphasis on teaching the volunteer to communicate effectively in his skill area and within the social context of his job site rather than acquiring general structural knowledge makes FSI type language testing less than satisfactory.

Estimated Foreign Language Expenditures

Expenditure and student data for FY 1971 and FY 1972 is attached to this letter. [See GAO note 2, p. 114.]

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this GAO Draft Report and we will be pleased to provide any additional data that you may request.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Blatchford

Joseph H. Blatchford
Director

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

AUG 3 1972

Mr. Oye V. Stovall
Director
International Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stovall:

I am forwarding herewith a memorandum dated July 25, 1972 from Mr. John W. Johnston, Director of Personnel and Manpower, which constitutes the comments of AID on the U.S. General Accounting Office's draft report titled, "Review of Foreign Language Activities of the Federal Government."

Sincerely yours,

Edward F. Tennant
Auditor General

Enclosure: a/s

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Comments on the GAO Review of Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government.

A. General Comments

The findings and conclusions outlined in the report generally reflect problems which have confronted the Agency in the administration of its language training programs over the years. It should be pointed out that, in this area, A.I.D. has special problems which are inherent to the nature of the Agency which is not a career Agency. The result is a large turnover of personnel which, together with A.I.D.'s personnel rotation policy on a worldwide basis, make it very difficult to develop overall language competence. This also compounds the problem of utilization of language proficient staff for positions requiring foreign language capability.

Another factor is the staffing of A.I.D.'s overseas programs by a large number of technicians selected primarily for their technical background and experience who generally do not have foreign language proficiency and frequently have limited language-learning potential. These technicians include employees detailed to A.I.D. from other Government agencies (e.g. USDA, Census, Commerce, Customs Bureau, etc.) usually for a two-year tour and return to their parent Agency.

Because of this situation and considering the period of training required to learn esoteric languages and the lack of carry-over value for languages such as Turkish, Korean, Lao or Thai, A.I.D. has concentrated its efforts on upgrading the language competence of its personnel mainly in French, Spanish, and Portuguese. This is evidenced by the fact that as of January 1972, 54% of the employees assigned to Latin America had the required level of proficiency and 66% of the total number of employees assigned to Latin America had a proficiency of S-2 or better in the local language as compared to 37% and 49% respectively in 1968. Because of increased field testing and recent testing in Brazil, it is strongly suspected that these percentages are even higher as of this writing.

On an Agency-wide basis, there has also been a substantial increase in the percentage of employees who have the required language proficiency, as evidenced by the following statistics:

	1970*		As of 1/20/72	
	#	%	#	%
Overseas U.S. Personnel Strength (excluding Contract Personnel)	5,050	-	3,465	-
Employees assigned to positions with language requirements	2,363	47%	1,143	34%
Positions adequately filled	495	21%	496	43%
Positions not adequately filled	1,868	79%	647	57%

*As computed by GAO. A.I.D. provided 1968 statistics.

The reduction in the number of employees assigned to positions with language requirements in general (from 2,363 to 1,143) and in the number of esoteric language requirements in particular (from 1,077 in 1968 to 340 in 1972) is mainly due to drastic cuts in field positions especially in Vietnam which accounted for 26% of the requirements in 1968 against 10% in 1972.

[See GAO note 1, p. 114.]

B. Comments on Pages 28 & 28A pertaining specifically to A.I.D.

Of the total number of established language requirements--34% of all overseas positions--8% require an S-1 level and 26% an S-2 level or higher. As of January 1972, 43% of the personnel assigned overseas met these requirements. In Latin America, 700 positions or 98% have language requirements; 346 or 49% of these positions require an S-3 or S-4 proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese. Fifty-four percent of the staff assigned to these positions meet the language requirements.

In Turkey, in January 1972, there were 55 positions of which 10 required Turkish, eight of these were encumbered and three employees, or 37% met the language requirement.

With regard to the yearly review of language requirements, the Agency has experienced some difficulty in obtaining such reviews from a number of Missions, such as Vietnam, where other priorities have usually preempted this review. In view of this, while employees are in effect assigned to positions requiring Vietnamese, in many cases the requirements are shown against the wrong positions in the records. This accounts for showing only 8% of Vietnam personnel meeting requirements whereas 30% of the staff have Vietnamese proficiency, 13% at the S-2 level or better. Special attention will be given to this problem when the next review is due in March 1973.

Increased emphasis has been given to providing pre-departure language training in the world languages as evidenced by the progress made since 1970 in meeting requirements. Greater emphasis will be given in requiring pre-departure training in esoteric languages in the future.

The Agency trend is toward a reduction of direct hire personnel overseas with an increased number of contract employees. In order to assign better language-qualified contract personnel, A.I.D. is considering a new policy whereby contractors will be required to provide language training through Agency-utilized facilities rather than through schools of their choice. This new proposed policy should enable A.I.D. to provide better quality training, most likely more economically, and to ascertain through FSI testing that contract employees possess the required proficiency before leaving the United States.

[See GAO note 1, p. 114.]

C. Comments on Pages 2, 3, 4, 40, 50, 53

--the lack of emphasis on utilization of language proficient staff for positions requiring foreign language capability.

Comment: A.I.D. is in the process of making employee language proficiency data more readily available to Placement Specialists through broader distribution of RAMPS* listings. Through RAMPS, it is also possible to obtain listings of employees with the needed level of language proficiency in a particular functional category (agriculture, education, community development, etc.) by grade, for selection and placement purposes. Thus RAMPS, established approximately two years ago, should facilitate better utilization of language proficient staff.

Approximately two years ago, a procedure was established whereby Missions are given end-of-training ratings for employees who did not reach the required level of proficiency before departure with a reminder that they are to be enrolled in the Post language program upon arrival. This procedure not only enables the Missions to be aware of continued training needs, but also facilitates enrollment in classes at the appropriate level.

--The language training programs of the State Department at posts overseas were generally ineffective in achieving significant increases in language proficiency.

Comment: A.I.D. has been aware of the problems involved in Post language training and feels strongly that the Post Language Programs cannot and should not be used as substitute for pre-departure training but merely for continued training for employees who have not quite met the language requirement before leaving for Post. Thus, increased emphasis will continue to be placed on pre-departure training. Post training is generally useful for employees assigned to positions with no language requirement and for dependents to enable them to acquire the courtesy or S-1 level of proficiency.

--There is a need for more systematic coordination among Federal agencies of foreign language training and research.

Comment: With regard to utilization of available training resources, A.I.D. has made use of available spaces in the DLI contract classes at no cost to DLI or A.I.D. whenever an FSI class was not available. Two students in FY-70 and six in FY-71 were thus enrolled in Thai and Lao training programs resulting in savings to A.I.D. of approximately $20,000 in tuition costs. Better dissemination of course schedules would be most helpful in this area if the Agency is to take advantage of other Agency programs as the need and opportunity arise.

A.I.D. does not conduct any research programs. It is felt, however, that the development of glossaries in the most common languages for different areas of specialization such as agriculture, economics, education, etc... would be most useful. These could be handed out to students at some point during training for use in conversation practice to make the training more relevant to employees' needs.

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*Revised Automated Manpower and Personnel System

--Periodic retesting of personnel with a language proficiency.

Comment: Retesting of A.I.D. personnel by FSI is performed in Washington or in conjunction with FSI Linguists' or Regional Language Supervisors' visits of the Post Language programs. Employees' proficiencies are also retested immediately before re-assignment to determine compliance with language requirements or training needs, if any, or eligibility for incentive pay increases.

It is felt that the current retesting policy meets the Agency's needs in this area. Systematic retesting on a three- or five-year basis would be costly, difficult to administer and, in many cases, irrelevant in determining training needs upon re-assignment. Therefore, A.I.D. does not plan at this time to establish a retesting policy at five-year intervals.

--Development of tests and testing procedures that will adequately measure the language proficiencies needed.

Comment: The Agency feels that research in this area belongs at FSI and that they should have an on-going research program which would recognize A.I.D.'s requirements as well as those of the Department of State.

[See GAO note 1, p. 114]

--...A.I.D. language essential positions in Korea...(p. 40)

Comment: Rural Development Advisors, like other technicians, are selected primarily for their technical ability and secondarily for their language proficiency or language-learning ability. Few, if any, are found with knowledge of Korean and most have limited learning potential. This is evidenced by the fact that, several years ago, a number of Rural Advisors were enrolled at FSI for 23 weeks full-time training. Their language aptitude test scores ranged from 44 to 57, representing rather low aptitudes for learning esoteric languages. They completed training with an S-1 level of proficiency with the exception of one who reached an S-1+. In order to reach an S-2 or higher proficiency, training would have had to be extended for an inordinately long period of time and, given their limited aptitudes, it is questionable whether these goals could have been reached. Where "hard-to-learn" languages, such as Korean, are involved, the Agency finds itself frequently in a trade-off situation between technical qualifications and language-learning potential. While A.I.D. is not pleased with this, it is the best that can be done to meet operational needs.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

JUL 24 1972

Mr. Max Hirschhorn
Deputy Director
General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Hirschhorn:

Thank you for the opportunity of reviewing the proposed report to the Congress on your review of foreign language training activities of the Federal Government, sent to us on May 19, 1972.

We are basically in agreement with the conclusions reached and recommendations and suggestions proposed. Generally, the facts having specific relevance to the Foreign Agricultural Service activities are accurate. Our specific comments on recommendations having relevance to this Service are:

a. We will develop a plan of action to improve our language capabilities.

b. We agree with the intent of the recommendation that language training be given prior to assuming duties in language essential positions overseas.

We will move toward implementing this recommendation as much as ceiling and budgetary limits will permit. The principal cause of failure in recent years to train prior to assuming duties in language essential positions overseas has been the inadequate ceiling permitting training time.

We would appreciate the following information being used in the final report in lieu of that shown:

a. We understand the figures shown in the table on page 20 are based on overseas staffing as of September 19, 1970. The footnote indicates the period covered as FY 1971. It is requested that the figures on the enclosed table, based on U.S. overseas staffing as of June 24, 1971, be inserted in lieu thereof.

b. The inclusion of the new FY 1971 figures necessitates the correction of the figures on page 31 of the report. Enclosed is a copy of page 31 with the corrections requested.

We would appreciate a copy of the final report submitted to the Congress.

Sincerely,

Assistant Administrator
Management

Enclosures: 2

[See GAO note 2, p. 114.]

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO

YOUR REFERENCE

10 JUL 1972

Mr. Oye V. Stovall
Director, International Division
United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stovall:

We have carefully studied the draft report of your "Review of Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government." We conclude that your findings are significant and your recommendations practical.

It is a fact, as stated in your draft report, that the Civil Service Commission has been established by law as the primary focal point for most interagency training within the Government and that agencies are required by law to report such training annually to the Commission. Technically, the Foreign Service of the United States under the Department of State, is not subject by law to the reporting requirements since it is specifically excluded from the Government Employees Training Act.

Executive Order 11348, however, extended the Commission's responsibility for coordinating interagency training to include those agencies and portions of agencies excepted by the Training Act. The Executive Order further required the head of each agency to "extend agency training programs to employees of other agencies ... and assign his employees to interagency training whenever this will result in better training, improved service, or savings to the Government." In addition, each agency head is called upon to "establish interagency training facilities in areas of substantive competence as arranged by the Civil Service Commission."

In light of the above, your recommendation that the Secretary of State take the leadership in establishing an interagency committee whereby language training resources can be utilized to the maximum extent by all benefitting agencies makes eminent good sense. The Department of State is certainly among the chief conductors and heaviest users of language training. If this recommendation becomes a part of your final report, we will work closely and supportively with such an interagency committee in the interests of effective coordination of language training in the Federal service.

In the meantime, we have included in the 1972-73 Interagency Training Programs Catalog, now being printed, information about certain foreign language courses offered by the Foreign Service Institute. The current issue of "Agency Training Centers for Federal Employees" shows that the Foreign Service Institute offers intensive language training which is available to employees of Department of State and selected employees of other Government agencies for whom training and instruction in the field of foreign affairs is necessary. The supplement to this publication to be printed soon will show that intensive language training will again be available.

In view of your recommendation that the Commission require annual information from all agencies having foreign language training programs available for use by other activities, we will take definite action to acquire such specific information and to disseminate it to all user agencies.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on your fine draft report.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Hampton

Robert E. Hampton
Chairman

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

AUG 15 1972

Mr. Morton E. Henig
Associate Director
Manpower and Welfare Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Henig:

The Secretary has asked that I reply to your letter dated May 19, 1972, pertaining to the General Accounting Office draft report to the Congress entitled, "Review of Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government."

The enclosed comments set forth this Department's views on those parts of the report pertaining to the HEW, Office of Education (OE).

Sincerely yours,

James B. Cardwell
Assistant Secretary, Comptroller

Enclosure

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Comments Pertinent to the Draft Report to the Congress of the United States entitled "Review of Foreign Language Training Activities of the Federal Government".

GAO Recommended that:

The Secretaries of State, Defense, and Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Director of Action expand their efforts toward more systematic coordination of their individual research programs and development procedures for making their research results available on a Government-wide basis.

Department Comments

We concur in this recommendation. As pointed out by GAO, the basic problem of many of the language teaching materials prepared by or for various interested Federal agencies is that they are too tailored to the needs of the funding Agency. In our judgment, basic courses do not need to be so goal-specific. Because they are, there is much duplication of effort in these elementary materials. However, we believe that this recommendation should be combined with the one directed to the Secretary of State on page 93 regarding training, thereby resulting in a formal interagency committee on research and training. The role of the committee regarding research would be to (i) develop criteria appropriate to determine what aspects of material development are more broadly generalizable, (ii) jointly develop and review long range research plans - including requests for proposals - and (iii) participate jointly in the proposal selection process.

[See GAO note 1, p. .]

In the interim we will continue our informal efforts toward more systematic coordination of foreign language research activities by (i) announcing projected research activities at the Interagency Roundtable meetings; (ii) publicly announcing new contracts in the Linguistic Reporter (a publication with wide circulation in the professional language community) and (iii) publishing periodic summaries of all completed research.

[See GAO note 2, p. .]

GAO notes:

1. Pages referred to in these appendixes relate to an earlier draft of this report and do not necessarily correspond to those in the final report.

2. Pertinent comments have been incorporated in the report, but the attachments or enclosures are not included.

RATING SCALES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (FSI)

To be able to describe foreign language proficiency in quantitative terms, the State Department, AID, and USIA have adopted scales for skill in speaking (S-0 through S-5) and for skill in reading and translating (R-0 through R-5), as defined below. Each level includes the skills covered in all lower levels.

S-0 No practical speaking proficiency.

S-1 Elementary proficiency. Short definition: Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements.

Amplification: Can ask and answer questions on topics very familar to him; within the scope of his very limited language experience can understand simple questions and statements if they are repeated at a slower rate than normal speech; speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs; errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent, but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners attempting to speak his language; while topics which are "very familiar" and elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, any person at the S-1 level should be able to order a simple meal, ask for a room in a hôtel, ask and give street directions, tell time, handle travel requirements, and basic courtesy requirements.

S-2 Limited working proficiency. Short definition: Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited office requirements.

Amplification: Can handle, with confidence but not with facility, most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, one's work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle, with confidence but not with facility, limited business requirements (e.g., a vice consul can give a visa interview, a businessman can give directions to a secretary, a housewife can instruct a servant, but each may need help in handling any complications or difficulties in these situations); can understand most conversation on nontechnical subjects and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself simply with some circumlocutions (nontechnical subjects being understood as topics which require no specialized knowledge); accent, though often quite American, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.

S-3 Minimum professional proficiency. Short definition: Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to satisfy representation requirements and handle professional discussions within a special field.

Amplification: Can participate effectively in all general conversation; can discuss particular interests with reasonable ease; comprehension is quite complete for a normal rate of speech; vocabulary is broad enough that he rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

S-4 Full professional proficiency. Short definition: Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to Foreign Service needs.

Amplification: Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary, but would rarely be taken for a native speaker; errors of pronunciation and grammar quite rare.

S-5 Native or bilingual proficiency. Short definition: Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

Amplification: Has complete fluency in the language practically equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. To attain this rating usually requires extensive residence in an area where the language is spoken, including having received part of his secondary or higher education in the language.

APPENDIX VIII

R-0 No practical reading proficiency.

R-1 Elementary proficiency. Short definition: Able to read elementary lesson material or common public signs.

Amplification: Can read material at the level of a second-semester college language course or a second-year secondary school course; alternately, able to recognize street signs, office and shop designations, numbers, etc.

R-2 Limited working proficiency. Short definition: Able to read intermediate lesson material or simple colloquial tests.

Amplification: Can read material at the level of a third-semester college language course or a third-year secondary school course; can read simple news items with extensive use of a dicitionary.

R-3 Minimum professional proficiency. Short definition: Able to read nontechnical news items or technical writing in a special field.

Amplification: Can read technical writing in a special field or modern press directed to the general reader, i.e., news items or feature articles reporting on political, economic, military, and international events, or standard text material in the general field of the social sciences.

R-4 Full professional proficiency. Short definition: Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to Foreign Service needs.

Amplification: Can read moderately difficult prose readily in any area of the social sciences directed to the general reader with a good education (through at least the secondary school level), and difficult material in a special field including official and professional documents and correspondence.

R-5 Native or bilingual proficiency. Short definition: Reading proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.

Amplification: Can read extremely difficult and abstract prose, as well as highly colloquial writings and the classic literary forms of the language.

EXPECTED SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT
IN INTENSIVE LANGUAGE TRAINING
FSI (6 HOURS A DAY)

Language	Length of training	Achievement		
		Minimum	Average	Superior
French German Indonesian Italian Malay Portuguese Romanian Spanish Swahili	8 weeks 16 weeks 24 weeks	1 1+ 2	1/1+ 2 2+	1+ 2+ 3
Bulgarian Burmese Greek Hindi Persian Urdu	12 weeks 24 weeks 44 weeks	1 1+ 2/2+	1/1+ 2 2+/3	1+/2 2+/3 3/3+
Amharic Cambodian Czechoslovak Finnish Hebrew Hungarian Lao Polish Russian Serbo-Croatian Thai Turkish Vietnamese	12 weeks 24 weeks 44 weeks	0+ 1+ 2	1 2 2+	1/1+ 2/2+ 3
Arabic Chinese Japanese Korean	12 weeks 24 weeks 44 weeks 108 weeks	0+ 1 1+	1 1+ 2 3	1 1+ 2+

Copies of this report are available from the U. S. General Accounting Office, Room 6417, 441 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20548.

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